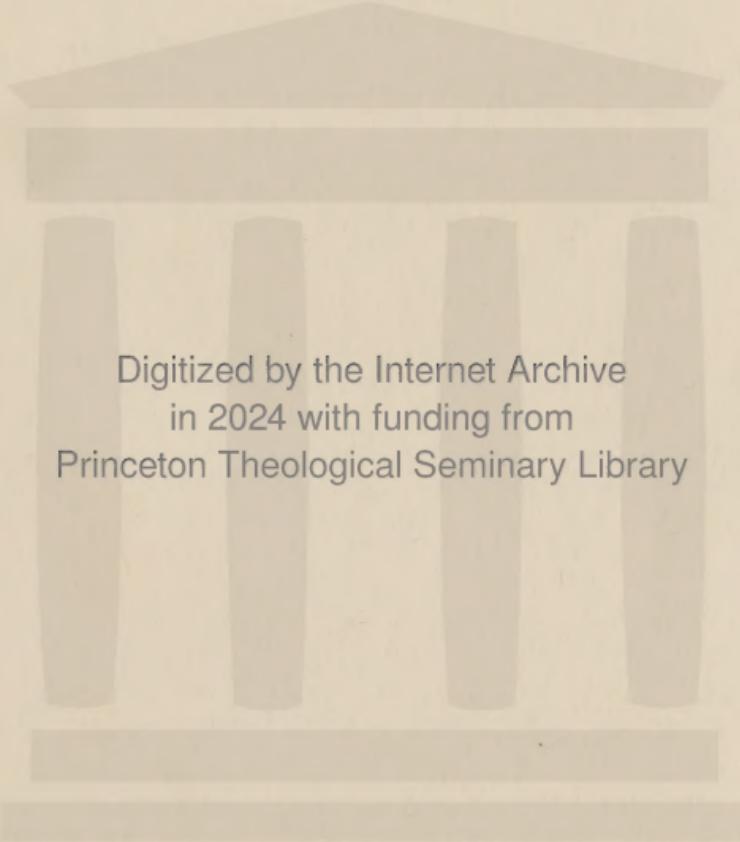


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LETTERS

TO

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,

ON

HIS AND OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

OF OUR

Saviour's Predictions of His Return,

RECORDED

MATT. XXIII. XXIV. XXV.

CONTAINING

A MINUTE EXAMINATION OF THESE PROPHECIES,

AND EXHIBITING

THE EVIDENCE THEY CONTAIN

THAT

CHRIST'S COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

IS

PERSONAL, AND NEAR AT HAND.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." 1 JOHN iv. 1.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." LUKE xxi. 35.

BY JAMES A. BEGG.

PAISLEY,

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1831.

P R E F A C E.

IN the character of the Son of man, the Son of God has gone “into a far country to receive a Kingdom, *and to return.*” Ere he left this lower world, He communicated his purpose to those whom he honoured with his love, and who were the chosen companions of his toil. In the prospect of his absence, He consoled them with the promise of the Spirit as the Comforter till his return, and animated their hearts with the prospects of glory which then awaited Him and them. With feelings which once characterized all the followers of Jesus, but which ignorance of their Master’s will has now weakened greatly, these tried and faithful friends on a particular occasion addressed to him an inquiry respecting His Coming. With endearing condescension did the Saviour at once comply with their request, giving them an Extensive Prediction of events from that time forward till the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. On this object of their peculiar desire he particularly enlarged, presenting a detailed account of the circumstances by which it should be attended, as well as a summary of events in the History of his church by which it should be preceded.

Regarding this magnificent Prediction of our blessed Lord, there has been a most unhappy discordance among Scripture Expositors, which, considered apart, might suggest an idea of great ambiguity as to its meaning. But a careful if not an unbiassed examination produced an impression on the mind of the author of these pages, that the lamented dis-

crepancies were less occasioned by any difficulties contained in the prediction itself, than they were the result of certain preconceived opinions concerning Christ's return, with which its very pointed statements would in no way accord. This conviction was greatly strengthened by that series of Discourses which more especially called forth the present production. The palpable inconsistencies into which an analytical exposition of the prediction betrayed their esteemed author, in endeavouring to support a *figurative* coming, as it is usually termed, and the benefits derived from the close and repeated investigations of the prophecy which these discourses naturally induced, suggested the idea that a full exhibition of particulars, and a contrast of statements, might, by the blessing of God, be rendered useful in recalling the church to her former standing on the subject of her Lord's return.

Sanctioned though they have been by men of superior discernment and Christian attainments, the Expositions now generally offered of the Saviour's prediction of his coming seem destitute of all that should command the submission of a faithful and intelligent inquirer. Harsh as such a judgment may seem, it is not uttered unadvisedly, nor is the accusation preferred without an effort dispassionately to establish its truth. Various theories of interpretation have been controverted on grounds which lie within the range of the most ordinary understanding, and although the statements and arguments contained in theological writings of high repute have been unhesitatingly rejected, the reasons are uniformly exhibited on which their accuracy is questioned. Let not those whose faith is thus impugned seek to put away from them the imputation, till able to satisfy themselves, at least, of its being unfounded; but, as they would value their Lord's approbation, let them receive from His mouth a knowledge of the time of his glorious return,

and yield to his intimations that implicit submission which the sacredness of his character imperiously demands.

These Letters have been more immediately addressed to the reverend gentleman by whose Expositions they were suggested. But although that view contained various peculiarities, there exists such a similarity and necessary connection as naturally elicited the animadversions offered on those by whom the Coming of the Son of man is misapprehended in its nature, even when it has not also been misplaced in point of time. In adopting this method, the author feels satisfied that ample justice has been done towards those from whose Interpretations he is compelled to dissent. Although the Discourses to which these Letters owe their origin, formed part of a regular course on the Gospel according to Matthew, the particular views therein maintained have especially been combated with every circumstance in their favour, which ability, care, and deliberation could afford. They were advocated by a reverend gentleman of acknowledged piety and talent—not in a few casual, hasty, or unstudied observations; but in a long series of above twenty Lectures on the Prophetic part of the Saviour's Discourse to his disciples, with few interruptions extending over a period of several months—in the composition of which he could avail himself of the aids of all preceding Commentators of similar sentiments—and delivered after attention had been loudly called to the doctrine of the Speedy Advent of the Redeemer, by numerous publications advocating Millenarian views; several of which he had perused, and some of the arguments of which he publicly aimed at refuting.

Of these Discourses the author of the following Letters took and preserved very copious notes, the principles of his former work on this subject being thereby assailed. These principles he deemed capable of ample vindication, and

conceiving that an important service might be rendered to the cause he has espoused, by a full and deliberate examination of our Saviour's predictions, he readily accepted of the call then made, that any farther evidence in favour of the premillennial Personal Advent be produced. Believing that much has been exhibited, it is now, with gratitude, committed into the hand of that blessed Spirit who alone can render it of any avail for producing conviction. The execution of his purpose has been unavoidably delayed long beyond what was originally designed ; but the subject, instead of diminishing in interest, is one possessed of growing importance. If the Return of Christ was that to which the faith and the hopes of believers were almost uniformly directed by the apostles, and generally cherished by Christians long after the decease of these inspired teachers, certainly it ought not now to be esteemed more lightly, when we have arrived so much nearer to its glory, and when the manifest signs of its approach follow each other in rapid succession. While, therefore, the author desired much to have submitted his remarks immediately upon the close of that series of Discourses by which they were elicited, he regrets the less that frequent interruptions from an impaired state of health have prevented the accomplishment of his design, till his views have acquired additional confirmation by those stupendous events of which the world little knows the issue.

Paisley, September 20th, 1831.

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LETTERS,

&c.

LETTER I.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S RETURN, AND THE DUTY OF INVESTIGATION.

REVEREND SIR,

It is with no feeling of levity that I thus address you. It can indeed yield me no delight to believe you are in error, nor have I any desire to triumph over the mistaken views of him to whom, under Christ, I have been most indebted for the precious communications of divine truth, and to whom I am also under obligations of a personal nature. The resolution of endeavouring to disprove your statements and to invalidate your arguments, was not formed without reluctance, nor has it been carried into execution without many a painful emotion. Whatever may be the opinion of others, with the testimony of an approving conscience I can confidently aver, that had there been no higher motive by which to be actuated than an ungodly desire of signalizing my prowess, or of displaying skill in argumentation, I should not on the present occasion have presented myself to your notice. Indeed the relation in which we stand, would, in all probability, have deterred me from animadverting on your opinions and ministrations, on any subject of less moment than that which I feel imperatively called thus to discuss.

But renewedly and increasingly impressed with the conviction that the Archangel's Trump shall sound ere long over an ungodly world, if not in the ear of an unthinking church, I felt not at liberty to abstain from again lifting up the voice of warning. While I willingly testify to your great

worth, and acknowledge with pleasure how much I have been indebted to your ministrations, I should have profited little by your instructions, were I yet ignorant of the duty you so strongly inculcate, of bearing testimony for God, unbiassed by the partialities of friendship, as well as unawed by the frowns of opposition. Often indeed have I been reminded by yourself of the obligations under which every Christian is laid of extending, so far as in his power, the knowledge of the truth revealed unto himself; and it would, in reality, be an improper requital of services received, did I not wish to correct your views where I deem them erroneous.

With such feelings, it ought not to be regarded as unkind or invidious to point out the mistakes into which you have fallen, or to exhibit how untenable are the opinions you have sought to promulgate. In the spirit of gratitude, therefore, as well as of Christian love, I pray the Lord whom we serve to bless to your soul what truths he may thus enable me to discover, to correct the errors into which I may have fallen, to supply what I may have omitted, and to give you such clear conceptions of his holy word, that you may feel constrained, as I have been, to proclaim His Speedy Coming, at the hazard or with the certainty of dissolving ties of long-endearred relationship, and of weakening bonds of Christian love. It is indeed with ardent desires of being made instrumental in bringing more fully to your notice the meaning and design of these predictions, I now address you. But it is also with the assured hope that others may profit, by seeing brought to the test of heavenly wisdom, those opinions on which so many confidently rely without examining for themselves the doctrines of God's holy word, or appreciating aright the glories reserved for His Son.

Such considerations diminish, but do not wholly remove, the difficulty and disagreeableness of the task of exhibiting the unscriptural nature of the expositions you have recently given of an important prediction of the Saviour's future purpose of condescending love. Still I am by no means ignorant that such a course, notwithstanding of these explanations, may very probably expose me to the suspicion of unworthy motives, on the part of those who can ill appreciate the influencing power of truth; but the vindication of such a doctrine must be regarded as of sufficient value to warrant,

in its defence, even the hazard of such an imputation. The time indeed for temporizing is now past, if it could ever have been excused ; for the full understanding of the predictions here referred to becomes daily more valuable, as it must teach more imperatively the duty of weaning our affections from the engrossing concerns of an evil world, and of continual watchfulness for the Glorious Advent of the Son of Man. If, by the blessing of God, I shall succeed in convincing you of this precious truth, I know I shall yet receive your thanks, as having conferred a favour of no trivial value. But whatever may be the issue in this respect, I never can divest myself of the incumbent obligation of seeking to vindicate the truth and testimony of God.

The question concerning the premillennial Coming of the Lord, ought not to be esteemed by the Christian as one of minor importance. It involves the honour of his God—the triumph of his Saviour, and the reward of His work—the resurrection of the saints who sleep in death, and the glorious transformation of those who shall be alive, personally to participate in all the joys of Millennial bliss. The annunciation of these forms the great burden of ancient prophecy ; they were frequently referred to by our Lord himself, and are much insisted on by his apostles. Such considerations gave to the doctrine of the Glorious Advent an importance in the eyes of primitive believers, of which it has been wholly divested by Modern Theology. Rarely as it finds a place in our pulpit discussions, the slightest attention will demonstrate, that there are few doctrines so frequently referred to in the word of God as the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, and the glory which shall then be revealed. To one conversant with his Bible no proof of this should be required ; yet it may not be wholly without advantage to call your attention to a few passages confirmatory of the statement. In doing so I will not carry you back to the writings of Old Testament prediction, or refer to the hopes of those who lived in ages prior to the incarnation of the Redeemer. Numerous and clear as I regard the proofs which might thence be derived, it would require argument to remove your objections, without which you would question their admissibility as evidence. But this is at present unnecessary, since it will be sufficient for our purpose to cite a few from the New Testament Scriptures, which will not

require the aid of argument to prove, even to the most prejudiced, their proper application. Even with such a limitation, we hope to be able to show that the future Coming of the Lord in glory is often stated as an important fact—that our special attention is demanded unto it—that it is used to urge to repentance—that it is addressed to Christians for their consolation—is referred to as a motive to duty—is presented as the period of our great reward—and that it is anticipated by the inspired penmen as the era of the Saviour's brightest triumph and of their own glorious destiny. And if it was so viewed, and if such were the uses to which it was formerly applied, it should not now be regarded as unimportant to the Christian, nor a Scriptural knowledge of the time of this event be considered as a matter of very trivial value.

With a frequency which forbids quotation, did our Lord himself intimate his future Coming in Glory, and enjoin upon all the duty of watching for His Return. In one form or in another, this event is introduced in nearly all His discourses on record. By parable and by precept, by comparison and by contrast, in terms more or less direct, it is strongly enforced and many of its circumstances are fully illustrated. Equally did the Saviour inculcate this doctrine on friends and on foes; on the disciples whom he loved, and on those before whom he was arraigned. He taught it in private, and in public; in the guest-chamber, to the select few, and openly in the temple to the assembled multitudes; in the seclusions of Olivet, and at the bar of his unrighteous condemnation. And to all, the unvarying tenor, and not unfrequently the language of his admonition was, “Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

After the ascension of the Saviour, the same doctrine continued to be taught in like manner by His apostles. They urged it with equal frequency, and that also for the inculcation of the same holiness of heart and of life. It runs through all their addresses with which we have been favoured, whether delivered orally or by epistle. In the very First Sermon which was preached after our Lord had left the earth, Peter reminded his countrymen that David “being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according

to the flesh, *He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.*" Acts ii. 30. And on this very ground he urged them to repentance; "For," says he, "*the promise is unto you, and to your children,* and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call." ver. 39. Again in the Second Sermon on record, delivered also by Peter after the cure of the lame man, the apostle, again addressing the Jews, calls upon them to repent "and be converted, *that your sins may be blotted out when the Times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, AND HE SHALL SEND JESUS CHRIST,* which before was preached unto you." Acts iii. 19, 20.

The same doctrine which the apostles began thus early to preach unto the Jews, they continued also to teach among the Gentiles. Of this their epistles contain abundant evidence, not only in the allusions which these contain to doctrines they had previously declared, but also in the statements they directly make upon the subject. Paul thanked God on behalf of the church of Corinth for the attainments they had made, of whom it was his praise, "So that ye come behind in no gift, WAITING FOR *the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" 1 Cor. i. 7. The believing Jews were taught that "as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and, unto them THAT LOOK FOR HIM, shall *He appear the SECOND TIME, without sin unto salvation.*" Heb. ix. 27, 28. The Coming of the Lord, with its attendant glories, was regarded formerly as the Christian's "blessed hope," the contemplation of which should promote every holy principle in the soul. Thus Paul writing to Titus, says, "the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, has appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; LOOKING FOR *that blessed hope, and the Glorious Appearing* of the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Titus ii. 11—13. And the power and importance of this doctrine may be inferred from what the apostle immediately adds, "THESE THINGS SPEAK, and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." ver. 15.

In the view of his own dissolution, the apostle's great consolation still was the prospect of glorious reward at the

Coming of the Lord : "I am now ready to be offered," he says, "and *the time of my departure is at hand* : I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; Henceforth, *there is LAID UP for me A CROWN of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me AT THAT DAY ; and not to me only, but *unto all them also that LOVE HIS APPEARING.*" 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8. Thus "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," he elsewhere says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ;" and all this he states, was, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,"—the "resurrection of the just," there can be little reason to doubt. Phil. iii. 11—14. Peter also, when admonished by the Lord that he "must shortly put off his fleshly tabernacle," writes an epistle, the whole subject of which is to urge attention to the "sure word of *Prophecy*," and to instruct concerning "the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved," which he enjoins them to be "LOOKING FOR, and hastening unto," since they had been taught to expect "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," according to the *promise* of God concerning the Millennium, by Isaiah. 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13. Is. lxv. 17. For the church at Thessalonica Paul gave God thanks, that they had been "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God ; and to wait for his Son from heaven." 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

He consoled believers of that church, bereaved of Christian friends, by the assurance of their being brought back again at the Coming of the Lord : "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so *them also which sleep in Jesus will God BRING WITH HIM....* wherefore comfort one another with these words." He reasoned with the Colossians for purity, on the ground of future glory : "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. *When Christ, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the

earth." Col. iii. 2—4. Under oppression James exhorts believers to wait for the Coming of the Lord, as the period when all their wrongs shall be redressed ; "Be patient, therefore, brethren, *unto the Coming of the Lord*. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; *for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" James v. 7, 8. This was also Paul's consolation under all the trials and afflictions to which he was exposed : "For, if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. *If we suffer*, we shall also *reign with Him.*" And on this the apostle grounded an important admonition to Timothy as a minister of the gospel. "*Of these things*," says he, "*put them in remembrance*, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself unto God, *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*, *RIGHTLY dividing the word of truth.*" 2 Tim. ii. 12—15. Even the apostle's commendation of the Thessalonian church, which he praises beyond any other, testifying that their "*faith groweth exceedingly,*" is made to bear on the same doctrine : "We ourselves," says he, "glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God *for which ye also suffer*: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, *rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire*, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*; *WHEN HE SHALL COME to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*" 2 Thess. i. 3—10. The contemplation of this happy time to which the apostle had often called their attention, was calculated to produce the most lively emotions of delight. They anticipated with rapture the bright era of the Saviour's triumph and of their own reward. In the eagerness of desire, these holy saints

could have wished, as they indeed expected it to be “instantly,” and the apostle having shown that it will not be till the destruction of the Man of sin, therefore prays, “the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, *and the patient waiting for of Christ.*” 2 Thess. iii. 5.

Such was the primitive desire for our Lord’s Return, and such was the apostolic use of it. Surely a doctrine so much and so often insisted on in the word of God, is not one of such inferior importance to the Christian that it should engage little of his attention, or rarely be made matter of serious reflection—a doctrine to be stated, perhaps illustrated, once in a life-time, or merely to be alluded to once in a year. No; by the Saviour and his apostles its belief is evidently regarded as the existence of a living principle, abiding and operative. To it they appeal under every variety of circumstance and condition ; and He who knows so intimately the mind of man, must have been well aware that such appeals find a ready response in every believing heart; and those who enjoyed his immediate tuition, under the guidance of the Spirit afterwards followed in precisely the same path.

Oh what a loss has Modern Theology sustained by the almost total exclusion of a doctrine which gave such a pathos to the addresses of the Saviour and the epistles of his apostles!—which ministered consolation under adversity, taught moderation in prosperity, and which served as a salutary corrective to every evil that arose. The prospects which this doctrine reveals to the believer, armed him with a holy heroism which no sufferings could subdue, infused additional efficacy into reproof wherever it was required, and powerfully strengthened the whole tone of Christian morality.

Contrary to the present prevailing practice, the passages already cited, prove that the Coming of Christ was urged by the apostles, not in the way of information of its being a very distant event—an event before which many ages of uninterrupted tranquillity and bliss must certainly elapse—but as one for which they were constantly required to be *looking* and *waiting*. As if the church could have no deliverance till her Lord’s Return, their views were carried forward to that event as the end of all their sufferings and peril ; and they lived with an ever-present impression of its glory as soon to be revealed. Waiting with anxiety for their Master’s hon-

our and their own reward, they would have been loath to think it distant by many years. They manifested a different spirit from those who seem as if they would gladly postpone, for a thousand years, a weight of glory they might be unable to bear, if they do not estimate lightly the promised enjoyment. Now, that we have evidently arrived at the very eve of that time for which the primitive church so anxiously longed, and to which they so earnestly looked, many of the people of God appear as if they would have preferred to live in earlier times, and that instead of obtaining a glorious transformation, they would rather have submitted their mortal frame as a prey to the Devourer. Had believers in the first ages of the church been made aware, not merely of the events first to occur, but also of the time they should occupy, (for their great mistake arose from their ignorance of the duration of Antichristian domination,) they would have burned with impatience, and grieved for the delay. They, indeed, needed to be often reminded of the duty “of the *patient* waiting for of Christ,” a frame of mind, which it is now little necessary to inculcate. Nor is it difficult to discover the reason. Their attention was constantly directed to the Return of Him who is the object of faith, and its importance exhibited. For, from the citations already made, more than the importance to the Christian of the doctrine of Christ’s Coming in glory may surely be distinctly inferred. They do more than prove the frequency with which it is urged and referred to; they prove that it was much looked and longed for, that it was the frequent subject of fervent prayer, and that it was made available for every holy use, by the inspired apostles. How otherwise is it with the church in the present day! Seldom is the doctrine at all introduced; and if now, since attention was called to this fact by Millenarian authors, *the words* of such texts are sometimes introduced, it is often obviously with reluctance. And well it may, until a change of views is enjoyed: for that it is inconsistent is too easily perceived, to speak of constantly looking for the glorious appearance of the Redeemer, and to press as a duty “the *patient* waiting for of Christ,” while at the very moment it is believed, if with the same breath the conviction be not expressed, that that Coming will not be till a thousand years after. In other cases also where the language is supposed to be less

explicit, or where by detaching a phrase from its context the meaning of the words can be more easily concealed, you will bear me witness that it is not uncommon to connect them with expressions concerning temporal judgments or the death of individuals, with the design of confounding such events with the Coming of the Lord. Of the disingenuousness of such a practice I do not now speak; but oh is it becoming in Christian ministers so to deal with God's most holy word and Christ's most blessed promise?

But much as these things are to be regretted, since their tendency is not only to destroy the meaning of language, but to weaken the impression which ought to be produced by inspired testimony, they have been so long prevalent that it is not perhaps very surprising that in the present day they should have taken deep hold of the minds of those who minister in sacred things. Taking much the assistance of those who have made it the business of their lives to present to the church expositions of the Holy Scriptures, they have been by them led into views which of themselves few would have adopted. But evils once admitted, often wax worse, and an erroneous principle when introduced, is frequently carried to a degree of excess not originally contemplated. This remark is fully verified in the case of many, who having adopted, in particular instances, the views of eminent Expositors, afterwards apply the principle to an extent which would have alarmed him to whom they have originally been indebted for the suggestion.

But besides the fact that Commentators themselves depend much on each other, in modern times their systems have generally been formed upon a principle which admits of no interpretation which would place the Coming of the Lord before the Millennium. With very few exceptions, all our Systematic Theology has presented a different view of the question; and much as we must deplore the means by which these views are upheld, to the systems in which they are maintained may easily be traced the present opinions of the church upon the subject. In no former age, perhaps, has Theology been so completely systematized, or such implicit trust been reposed in the uninspired writings of men approved for talents, piety, and Scriptural research. Not unfrequently, this veneration amounts to little less than idolatry; and to venture to dispute the Scriptural authority of

any opinion, having such a sanction, is regarded by many as almost profane.

Thus we may account in some measure for the present disrepute of the doctrine of the Redeemer's Speedy Personal Return. Several of the Commentators most in request, are deeply embued with a principle of hostility to such a view—an hostility which, if not always sustained with ability, is at least sufficiently manifested in the sedulous care they evince to find for the multiplicity of passages which refer to the Coming of the Lord a meaning of an opposite nature. Should this, however, be found impossible, every effort is put forth to get it at least misplaced in point of time. In either case the desired result is not unfrequently obtained by a sacrifice of all consistent interpretation, and with utter disregard of the rules of ordinary propriety.

The varying forms which error has assumed in the interpretation of Scripture, is well exposed by the learned Bishop Horsley in the following passage on the very doctrine in question. "Time was," says he, "when I know not what mystical meanings were drawn, by a certain cabalistic alchymy, from the simplest expressions of holy writ,—from expressions, which no allusion could reasonably be supposed to any thing beyond the particular occasion upon which they were introduced. While this phrensy raged among the learned, visionary lessons of divinity were often derived, not only from detached texts of Scripture, but from single words—not from words only, but from letters—from the place, the shape, the posture of a letter: and the blunders of transcribers, as they have since proved to be, have been the groundwork of many a fine spun meditation.

"It is the weakness of human nature, in every instance of folly, to run from one extreme to its opposite. In later ages, since we have seen the futility of those mystic expositions in which the school of Origen so much delighted, we have been too apt to fall into the contrary error; and the same unwarrantable license of figurative interpretation which they employed to elevate, as they thought, the plainer parts of Scripture, has been used, in modern times, in effect to lower the divine.

"Among the passages which have been thus misrepresented by the refinements of a false criticism, are all those

which contain the explicit promise of the ‘Coming of the Son of man in glory, or in his kingdom;’ which it is become so much the fashion to understand of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman arms, within half a century after our Lord’s ascension, that to those who take the sense of Scripture from some of the best modern expositors, it must seem doubtful whether any clear prediction is to be found in the New Testament of an event in which, of all others, the Christian world is the most interested.”

SERMONS, pp. 1, 2.

While examining the authority for your own interpretation, it may be serviceable to inquire also into that of others, that by exposing their inconsistency with the divine standard, Christians may be led to inquire for themselves what is taught in that “sure word of Prophecy” which God has given for their guidance. The duty of investigation daily grows in importance, yet few comparatively are to be found with inquiring diligence seeking to ascertain the ground of their trust. While such unbounded confidence is reposed in those who minister in sacred things; awful is the responsibility which those incur, who give any encouragement to unchristian indolence, or who may lull to rest by their delusive interpretations. Think, I entreat of you, what may be your own feelings if very soon an astounded world should witness the Glorified Redeemer revealed from heaven in flaming fire, while you are still leading forward the views of your people to the successive generations which you say we are assured must first arise. I speak with plainness but in sincerity, and I dare not conceal the fears I entertain of the guilt of those whose business it is to declare the whole counsel of God, who yet from negligence or by design, conceal a doctrine of such transcendant importance as the revelation of the Son of man, when on the very eve of being manifested to all, “as the lightning which cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west.”

It is painful so to speak of men who are or may have been regarded as the brightest ornaments of the Christian church. But however painful, it is much more dangerous to be silent, while, by their words or their works, they mislead those who implicitly trust in them. By the very sanction of their names, good men may stamp a degree of credit upon error, so as seriously to affect the interests of truth, and

which on that very account calls the more imperatively for rigid examination.

The necessity for such remarks in reference to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, will hardly be questioned by those who have given much attention to the innumerable and contradictory and perplexing views offered by Expositors of many of the Scripture precepts, promises, and predictions. Much that is clear they have enveloped in darkness, and few who have had occasion to consult them often, will boast much of their assistance in elucidating what is really obscure. “The labours of Expositors and Commentators,” says Bishop Newton, “which were designed for a remedy, are now become a part of the disease. The case is the same with the laws of God as with the laws of the land. Read a statute and you will think you understand it, but afterwards hear the opinions of counsel upon it, and their explanations, *and they will explain the meaning quite away*: In like manner, many a text of Scripture seemeth plain enough to a man upon his reading it by himself, and comparing it with the context; but upon consulting the tribe of Paraphrasts and Annotators, he scarce knoweth what to think; and *instead of that one GENUINE SENSE which he conceived, he hath ten or twenty senses offered to him, or rather NO SENSE AT ALL.* Commentators are a kind of necessary evil; there is no doing well without them or with them. The truth is,” the Bishop too truly adds, “*men interpret Scripture according to their opinions, and frame not their opinions according to Scripture.*” With so much evidence of the truth of such remarks, we cannot but love the piety and admire the sagacity displayed by Luther, when he expressed “his fear lest the vast increase of books should in a short time obscure the doctrines of truth, so that the Bible itself should be again ‘hidden under a bushel.’”

It may, I think, be safely affirmed, that no doctrine of Scripture has received more of such treatment than that of the Coming of the Lord; and of all the passages in which it is declared, none so conspicuously as that prediction which forms the subject of our more immediate investigation. By supposing that when our Lord foretold His Coming with the clouds of heaven He spake of entirely different events, incalculable mischief has been occasioned. Men’s minds

have thus been altogether led away from the consideration of that doctrine which the prophecy was designed to teach. The evil is not confined merely to the view taken of the prediction itself; but in every passage which speaks of the Coming of the Lord, the mind which has fully imbibed the view condemned, must feel itself at perfect liberty, and be ready at once to reply to the arguments or remonstrances or cautions they suggest, that if in a prediction of such seeming importance as that delivered by our Lord himself, nothing more was meant than the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, then may we easily understand in a similar manner, and as meaning nothing more, those which less formally and with less circumstantiality inculcate the same doctrine. And good reason there were for such indifference if the expositions on which it rests were correct. But this opinion may have been received by many who have attended little either to the grounds on which it is formed or to the consequences to which it naturally leads. To expose therefore the inconsistency and impropriety of such interpretations, and to point out some of their injurious effects, will, in dependance on that blessed Spirit whose aid I implore, in some future Letters, be the object of,

Reverend Sir,

Yours very faithfully, &c.

LETTER II.

A FULL AND COMBINED VIEW OF THE SAVIOUR'S PREDICTION OF HIS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, AS RECORDED BY THE DIFFERENT EVANGELISTS, WITH THE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF EXPOSITORS.

REVEREND SIR,

HAVING in the preceding Letter endeavoured to show the importance to the Christian of the Doctrine of Christ's Return in Glory, and having urged the Duty of Investigation, I proceed to consider one of our Lord's own Predictions concerning that event. Fre-

quently as the Saviour discoursed of his Coming, there is only one Prophecy recorded at length in which the time and circumstances are minutely specified. On the occasion alluded to, however, these are particularly narrated; and, with a care proportioned to the importance of the subject, has the Spirit employed three of the evangelists to embody it with considerable fulness in their respective Gospels. The account furnished by Matthew, which lately formed the subject of a series of Lectures by yourself, is the most particular; but, in the inquiry into its full meaning, we will be greatly aided by having before us at one view all the circumstances related by the evangelists severally, as each of them supplies information not furnished by the others.

In consequence, however, of the diversified representations of the inspired penmen, there will be, in the order of arrangement in any such attempted harmony, variations in the allocation of certain particulars, suggested by the general views entertained of the whole prediction. Your ideas of the time and nature of the Coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven will therefore lead you to object to any harmony which I can form; but as the following has not been adopted without a careful comparison, my grounds of preference, and its accordance with the Sacred narratives, will more obviously appear in course of the argument, in cases where you would at present propose a different arrangement. Although wholly in the words of our authorized version, which have been adhered to even in cases where the connecting of the statements of the different Evangelists might have required slight modification, to avoid very frequent citation it has been formed into paragraphs, with the combined references appended to each.

On various occasions our Lord had intimated to his disciples that He should not only be put to death and rise again, but that he should leave them altogether for a time. Nor were these intimations wholly confined to his disciples, but were even made to the Jews in general. A prediction delivered in the temple, and which contained the latter important circumstance, appears to have occasioned those inquiries by the apostles, in answer to which our Lord delivered that enlarged prophecy which is now to be the subject of investigation. In order therefore to the right

understanding of its meaning, it will be necessary to have in view not only the prediction itself, but also the circumstances out of which it arose.

In denunciations of wrath upon the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, our blessed Lord said unto them,

"Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your House is left unto you desolate ; for I say unto you, *ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that Cometh in the name of the Lord.*" Mat. xxiii. 34—39.

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple ; and His disciples came to him, to show him the buildings of the Temple. And as he went out one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here ; how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts. And Jesus answering said unto him, See ye not all these things ? Verily I say unto you, the days will come in the which there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." Mat. xxiv. 1, 2. Mark xiii. 1, 2. Luke xxi. 5, 6.

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the Temple, the disciples came unto him ; and Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked Him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be ? and what shall be the sign of thy Coming and of the end of the world ?" Mat. xxiv. 3. Mark xiii. 3, 4. Luke xxi. 7.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you ; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near ; and shall deceive many : go ye not therefore after them ; but when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, and commotions, be not terrified or troubled ; for all these things must first come to pass, but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and great earthquakes in divers places ; all these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted ; and they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, and kill you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and to councils, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, for a testimony against them ; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake, and it shall turn to you for a testimony. But when they shall lead you and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate what ye shall answer ; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, speak ye, for it is not you that speak

but the Holy Ghost; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." Mat. xxiv. 4—9. Mark xiii. 5—11. Luke xxi. 8—15.

"And then shall many be offended and betray one another, and hate one another; and ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death; the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but there shall not an hair of your head perish; in your patience possess your souls; he that shall endure *unto the end*, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and *then SHALL THE END COME.*" Mat. xxiv. 10—14. Mark xiii. 12, 13. Luke xxi. 16—19.

When ye, therefore, shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place where it ought not, (whoso readeth let him understand,) when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto; for these be the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Mat. xxiv. 15—19. Mark xiii. 14—17. Luke xxi. 20—24.

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day, for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except the Lord had shortened those days, there should no flesh be saved; but, for the Elect's sake whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened those days. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or lo He is there, believe it not; for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. But take ye heed, behold I have foretold you all things. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold He is in the desert; go not forth: behold He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the Coming of the Son of man be.* For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Mat. xxiv. 20—28. Mark xiii. 18—23.

But in those days, *immediately after* that tribulation, there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars

shall fall from heaven, the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And *then* shall appear the *sign* of the Son of man in heaven ; and *then* shall all the tribes of the earth mourn ; and **THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY** ; and He shall send *his angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together *his elect*, from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven, from one end of heaven to the other. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for *your redemption draweth nigh*. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree, and all the trees ; when the branch is tender and putteth forth leaves, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So ye, in like manner, when ye see all these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled*. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven ; neither the Son, but the Father only. Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is ; and take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so *that day* come upon you unawares. For, *as a snare* shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.¹⁷ Mat. xxiv. 29—36. Mark xiii. 24—32. Luke xxi. 25—36.

Such is a view of this extensive and magnificent prophecy, derived, by a combination of the circumstances, from the several narratives of the three evangelists. It will not, I think, be questioned by any one, that it *appears*, at least, to have two great prominent objects, the Destruction of Jerusalem, with the consequences which flowed directly from it, and the Coming of the Son of man in glory. The former is clearly, and at considerable length referred to, but it seems no less evident, that the evangelists also foretell, and that with still greater minuteness, the Second coming of Christ, for which all of them proceed farther to inculcate the duty of watchfulness, by a variety of parables descriptive of the state of the church and of the world, at the time of His Return. To these we shall afterwards have occasion to advert, with the view of more fully demonstrating, that our Lord, by the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, means His Personal Appearance. At present, however, we proceed to notice a few of the inter-

pretations which have been given of this portion of Scripture.

Whatever may be the difficulties which the prediction itself involves, these, instead of being diminished, have been prodigiously increased by learned and pious Expositors. It may indeed with truth be affirmed, that more contradictory, confused, and inconsistent opinions have never been presented of any portion of the divine word, than have been given of this sublime prediction, even by friends of the Redeemer. Its meaning begins now indeed to be more clearly perceived, and more correct expositions are offered, and its circumstances are more generally understood than perhaps at any former period. A few eminent men there have been, in different ages, whose views of the time and nature of the coming of the Son of man we deem correct—understanding it not only to intimate the overthrow of the Jewish polity, but also the Personal Return of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the Restoration of Israel, at the close of the times of the Gentiles. But, by a misconception of the Saviour's meaning in the 34th verse, it has most usually been supposed, that our Lord affirmed, that the whole prophecy should have received its accomplishment before the generation of men then living had ceased to exist. This is your own idea of the words referred to, as it has been that of many eminent men who have gone before you. This opinion has, however, given much ground to the enemies of the Saviour to triumph in His supposed failure as a prophet, and has perplexed and afflicted others, whose views of the endowments of the Saviour for the Prophetic office would not admit of the ready reception of any interpretation which seemed inconsistent with matter of fact. “The near approach of this wonderful event,” says the infidel Gibbon, “had been predicted by the Apostles; the tradition of it was preserved by their earliest disciples; and those who understood in their literal sense the discourses of Christ Himself were obliged to expect the Second and glorious coming of the Son of man in the clouds, *before that generation was totally extinguished* which had beheld his humble condition upon earth. Yet,” he adds, “the revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the language of Prophecy and Revelation.” *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. I. pp. 470, 471.*

That the Coming of the Son of man in glory was continually urged upon the attention of Christians by the apostles, my former Letter demonstrates; and that it was constantly expected by primitive believers, History fully testifies. But that our Lord affirmed, that it would take place before those alive had departed, is an idea which I utterly reject. It appears to have arisen from attaching a wrong sense to a word used by the Saviour, and woful have been the consequences which have resulted from it.

On the above passage from Gibbon, Dr. Thomas Edwards, the author of a series of Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge in 1790, says, "The various and opposite methods which Theologians have adopted to remove an objection which is too obvious to be overlooked, form, it must be confessed, a very considerable presumption, that an adequate solution of the difficulty has not hitherto been discovered, and that the objection [of the infidel] is founded on the basis of truth." In confirmation of this opinion he farther adds, that "some interpreters imagine that the Prophecy relates entirely to the ruin of the Jewish nation: others, by the convenient introduction of types and double senses, preserve in it a reference throughout to *the consummation of all things*. Some have contended that it partly belongs to the former, and partly to the latter; but what portions of it are applicable to the one, and what to the other, they cannot ascertain;—while a few have ventured to assert, that it represents the final judgment as immediately subsequent to the Jewish Calamities." pp. 18, 19. And inconsistent as these views appear, they embrace all the interpretations offered by Antimillenarian expositors of the present day, whatever modifications there may be of parts of inferior moment, of which there is indeed no inconsiderable variety.

But, after such an exhibition of inconsistent and conflicting expositions, it is not a little remarkable to find this learned preacher assert, that our Lord really did predict the Advent of "the Son of man *descending visibly* from heaven, *before the generation then existing was totally extinguished*"!! p. 23. And again, he says, "our Lord, in the xxivth of Matthew, decisively foretells, that the generation then existing should not be totally extinguished till it had witnessed his *Second and glorious appearance* in the clouds of heaven" !! p. 19. He thence concludes, that "the records

of History do not authorise us to believe that this prediction was accomplished at the destruction of Jerusalem." pp. 19, 20. And he further states, that "this awful prediction is not recorded among the stupendous prodigies of the Jewish war." p. 23. Who could hesitate for a moment in placing his own interpretation among the number which have presented no adequate solution of the difficulty? And who does not perceive that the great stumbling-block has been, the idea attached to "this generation"?

Mr. Faber, an eminently learned living author, who has devoted much attention to the study of prophecy, while he places the coming of the Son of man at the close of the times of the Gentiles, and not only regards it as an event yet future but as near at hand, denies it to be the personal return of Christ. While he rejects as a "vulgar error" that interpretation which makes this event a *Figurative Advent at the destruction of Jerusalem*, he not much less inconsistently with the whole object and scope of the prediction, still understands it to be a *Figurative Advent at the restoration of Israel*!

But a still more remarkable view of this important prediction is that given by Mr. Houghton, the author of two sermons on the subject. Having, as he conceives, discovered discrepancies in the sacred narratives, he says, "From these differences among the Evangelists, it is evident that they spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the world PROMISCUOUSLY, and consequently that they considered these two advents as one and the same"!!! p. 225. Again he says, "Mark and Luke, while evidently discoursing of the calamities of the Jews, seem to rise by a sudden transition from the period of the Jewish state to that of the world itself, and describe the coming of our Saviour in terms nearly similar and equally sublime with those of Matthew, yet all with one consent refer the whole to that present generation." p. 226.

When such views are put forth by *Christian* authors, who can wonder at the charges of the Infidel Historian, or condemn as uncalled for the sneer they elicit? It is not at all surprising, that the enemy of our religion should continue dissatisfied, although as he says, "Erasmus removes the difficulty by the help of allegory and metaphor, and

the learned Grotius ventures to insinuate, that for wise purposes the pious deception was permitted to take place."

On the same ground, namely, the supposed necessity of finding the fulfilment of the whole prophecy during the life-time of at least some of those alive when it was delivered, many have conceived the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven to have taken place *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, by the preaching of the gospel, or otherwise. This was the view which you yourself sometimes avowedly took; but it was so mixed up, in a manner not very easily understood, or rather at different times you took such different views of the words, that any attempt at reply must embrace the whole. At one time you represented the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven to be the destruction of Jerusalem itself by the Romans; at another time it became the overthrow of the Jewish polity, which followed that event; and at a third time it was represented as the successful propagation of the gospel by the apostles; and again all of these were introduced *as if all equally THE ONE EVENT of the Coming of Christ*;—and, finally, there was occasionally the opinion given, that it still had a *leaning* and *looking forward* to the Personal Return of the Saviour; while there was, nevertheless, a constant and undeviating assertion, *that ALL had been fulfilled* during the life-time of some of those who were the contemporaries of our Lord.*

Such a variety of interpretations of *one* glorious event, given in language perfectly precise, and having a definite time appointed for its accomplishment, seems not very

* Among the multitude of astonishing interpretations which have been offered of Mat. xxiv. there is yet one worthy of being put upon record. It was delivered in your own pulpit, since the publication of the first edition of my "Connected View," by a person then a probationer, but who now has the spiritual oversight of a Christian congregation. Evidently regarding his affirmation as of more consequence than the multiplicity of evidence produced for the premillennial return of the Redeemer, he at once set aside both your interpretation and mine, by an emphatic "*I say it contains a Prophecy concerning the church, from the time that she came out of THE GARDEN OF EDEN, till the end of time*"!!! Any remark on this felicitous discovery is not more unnecessary than it would be unappreciated by its author. Scriptural argument were useless, where "*I say,*" is preferred to "*thus saith the Lord.*"

unlike the solutions sometimes presented by pupils to whom has been assigned the task of proving certain problems by every variety of computation, for the purpose of exercising them to ingenuity. The comparison would indeed appear in favour of the latter. For, while it must be confessed that probably nine-tenths of the ingenious calculations are neither designed to be repeated, nor perhaps ever will be in actual business, yet they have all had the merit of at least leading to the right conclusion; but it is obvious that in every case in which predictions referring to *one* event are applied to *a number* of very different events,—and events of an opposite nature,—not more than one *can* be correct. And, in the enumeration above referred to, the interpretations are evidently altogether wrong, having excluded the only event to which the prophecy can refer—the personal Coming of the Son of man at the close of the times of the Gentiles.

The following remarks of Dr. Benson appear to me to state accurately the duty of a Commentator, to which it is much to be regretted that more attention is not given, rather than to discover by ingenuity in how many ways the text may be confused and a reader perplexed, by having his attention forced from the obvious meaning of the divine annunciation made: “It is the business of the Commentator to find out *the one* true sense of Holy Scripture, and to set it before his reader in as clear a light as he can.” Again, the Doctor says, “It appears to me that a Critical Interpreter of Holy Scripture should set out with this *as a first principle*; viz. that *no text of Scripture has more than one meaning*; that *one true sense* he should endeavour to find out, as he would find out the sense of Homer or any other ancient writer. When he has found out that sense, he ought to acquiesce in it, and so ought his readers too, unless by the just rules of interpretation, they can show that he has mistaken the passage; and that another is the one, just, true, and critical sense of the place.”

This *unity of sense* it will be my object both to exhibit and vindicate, satisfied that thus only is the true meaning of the prediction to be obtained, and convinced that God is more to be glorified by it than by any scheme, however well designed, which is destitute of his sacred sanction. Before, however, proceeding farther, it will be proper to

endeavour to remove the obstacle which has been supposed to lie in the way of consistent interpretation, and which has occasioned such absurdity, confusion, and contradiction. This will, therefore, form the subject of the following Letter, by

Reverend Sir,

Yours very sincerely, &c.

LETTER III.

ON THE PRECISE SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD TRANSLATED “GENERATION.”

REVEREND SIR,

IN all the extracts contained in the preceding Letter, very pointed reference is made to the words “This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” The arguments which have been founded upon them, and the interpretations to which they have given rise, render necessary, therefore, a more careful examination of their meaning. More correct acquaintance with their precise signification will be of the highest importance to the right understanding of our Lord’s whole prophecy concerning His Return; for should it be proved that the idea which you and others have attached to them is not the only one of which they can admit, it necessarily follows that any interpretation dependent on that idea will be deprived of its support. And, with Mr. Faber, I am firmly convinced that “the passage where it occurs has been the chief ground of those erroneous expositions which would confine one of the most magnificent prophecies of Holy Writ to the mere destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus.” (*Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, vol. I. p. 262.) It forms the ground of Gibbon’s insinuation; it is expressly assigned by the writers formerly quoted for all the absurdities into which they have fallen, and on it you took your stand for affirming, that the whole of the predictions preceding are necessarily confined to the term of existence of

those who were the contemporaries of the apostles who then listened to our Lord. On this you founded the necessity of making your particular application; although, in not a few instances, was it evinced that your interpretation was adopted as one rather of imagined dire necessity, than of obvious accordance. But before affirming that the *Son of man* was seen coming in the clouds of heaven, and sending his angels to gather together his elect at the destruction of Jerusalem—an idea which it is not very easy for an unprejudiced mind to adopt—would it not have been proper farther to examine whether no other signification could be found for the expression which seemed to impose such a necessity? Had this been done, some explanation might have been discovered—as more than one have been suggested—which would wholly have freed you from the necessity of adopting an interpretation so strained and inconsistent with the express terms of the prediction itself, concerning the previous fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles.

Mr. Cuninghame, who has given much attention to the subject, considers the solution of this difficulty "to consist in a close attention to the word which is supposed to indicate the *complete fulfilment* of the prophecy in that generation." Considering it rather to signify "commencement running into subsequent continuance of action," he proposes, therefore, as the more correct rendering of the verse, "this generation shall not pass away, till all these things *shall be*, i. e. *shall begin* to be accomplished." *Dissertations on the Seals and Trumpets.* pp. 241, 242.

This view Mr. Cuninghame still inclines to believe correct, and has adhered to it as one principle by which a consistent interpretation of the prophecy may be given; justifying it in his Letter to the Editor of the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, in 1828, by adducing several passages in which a similar phraseology in the original is supposed to require a translation corresponding to that which, in the verse under consideration, would read, "this generation shall not pass till all these things *be fulfilling*."

But another, and what I esteem the proper explanation, yet remains to be considered. In the above, as also in all the interpretations which seek to find a fulfilment of the prediction of the coming of the Lord in the events connected

with the destruction of Jerusalem, it is uniformly assumed that the “generation” spoken of, absolutely and only means those alive at the particular time. This does not, however, appear to be always the case, nor to be its only signification. The word used in the original occurs frequently in the New Testament, and is, indeed, generally translated in our authorized version, *generation*. In many cases, however, this translation, if “generation” is so understood, appears incorrect, and in many the original would probably be better rendered “race,” or “people.” By the present translation, and the idea usually attached to it, our Lord, during his personal ministry, is frequently represented as condemning with much severity *that generation as a whole*, when it is evident that he directly referred to *that particular people* to whom he was more immediately sent, and among whom he lived and laboured. “I am not sent,” he said, “but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;” and the condemnation which he so often pronounces upon “this generation,” is not upon the whole of mankind then alive, but upon *that race* to whom he was especially missioned, and by whom alone he had hitherto been rejected.

Now this, you are aware, is the sense in which I apprehend we are to understand the word when our Lord said “this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled,” regarding Him to intimate, not the continuance of those alive, or any part of them, till the accomplishment of all he had predicted, but rather as foretelling the preservation of the Jews as a people, even in the most peculiar circumstances, till His Return. This view has been taken of the verse by many eminent men. Although Mr. Cunningham, as already noticed, adopts another explanation, he yet admits that when “the great and justly celebrated Mede,” in maintaining that here the word translated *generation* “does not mean a generation of co-existing men, but *a race or nation*, and the nation spoken of he takes to be that of the Jews,” and that when Mede “refers to the declaration of God in Jeremiah xxxi. 35, 36. as being parallel thereto,” he considers such a view as admissible, adding, that the word “is sometimes used in this sense both in the Greek version of the Old and New Testaments, is shown by Mede in the passages of his works referred to.” *Dissertations*, p. 240. The peculiar force and beauty, as

well as the propriety of this translation, is well urged by Mede. These he considers obvious when we regard it as our Lord's design "to assert *the continuance* of the Jewish nation. Verily, I say unto you—the Jewish nation, even to the wonder and astonishment of all who consider it, remains a distinct people in so long and so tedious a captivity, and after so many wonderful changes as have befallen the nations where they live." And after stating that the word used in the original signifies not only an age, but also a people, a nation, a race, he adds "*no one can deny* but this is one of the native notions of the Greek word translated '*generation*,' yea, and so taken in the Gospels as in the foregoing chapter, (Mat. xxiii. 36.) 'Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this nation.' So Beza renders it twice in the parallel place, Luke xi. 50, 51, and seven times in this gospel. Again," Mede continues, "Luke xviii. 25, 'the Son of man must be first rejected by this nation.' "

Nor is it only in these instances referred to by Mede, that Beza has so rendered γενεὰ, the word translated "generation" in our Lord's prediction. Of *thirty-nine* instances I have examined, in which this word occurs in the Greek New Testament, *twenty-two* are in Beza's Latin translation, rendered either by *gens* or *natio*, words always signifying *a people* or *nation*. This is not an unimportant testimony in favour of the proposed reading of the disputed verse; since, of Beza's Translation of the New Testament, Horne, in his Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, says, "*On account of its fidelity* it has always been highly esteemed by Protestants of every denomination."

Still I do not quote Beza as an infallible guide, but I do appeal to him as, in this case, a valuable and unbiased witness to the real meaning of the word. He must be allowed to have been a very competent judge, and he cannot be suspected of adopting generally a rendering suitable to his views of the passage in question; for although in more than twenty instances he has translated this word in the Greek by that which signifies "a nation," *in our Lord's prediction itself* he has rendered it by a word really signifying, in the disputed sense, "a generation." But it is not to his *opinion* of this or any other particular passage I now refer, but

to his understanding of the *general signification* of the word. And on his testimony the more reliance may certainly be placed, that contrary to his prevailing practice he has made this one of the exceptions to his more uniform translation; because so far from his being a witness objectionable on account of partiality, it is thus shown that his tendencies, if they operated at all, must have been to give the other rendering a preference. If then, a witness so well qualified and so unexceptionable, intimates his conviction of the meaning of the word to be that of *a nation or people*, by so translating it in a majority of the cases in which it occurs, he has, in so far as the mere words are concerned, and to the extent that his authority is regarded, removed all ground of complaint that it in any degree does violence to the language of our Lord, so to understand it in this prediction,—which, as I shall afterwards show, necessarily requires some such extended signification, by its including within it events posterior to the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles, which you admit to be still future.

But such an interpretation has not been confined, even among Scripture Expositors, to Mede and Beza. While the first edition of my “Connected View” was passing through the press, a dear friend put into my hands a Millenarian work published in 1770, by the Rev. S. Hardy, Lecturer at Enfield, Middlesex, in which nearly the same view is given of our Lord’s whole prediction. On the word translated “generation,” in addition to the sanction of Beza and Mede, he refers, as authority in support of the substituted rendering, to Chrysostom, Erasmus, and Pasor. I have since ascertained, that the same interpretation of the passage has been offered by many others.

Indeed, although in our Authorized version the word is almost uniformly translated “generation,” this rendering is rather to be viewed as intimating the translators’ sense of the passages in which it occurs, than as demonstrating their conviction, that this is the unvarying signification of the word. In Philippians, ii. 15 (“in the midst of a crooked and perverse *nation*,”) they have themselves translated it by the very word contended for by Mede, and adopted by Beza, and received by Hardy, and which I regard as that which ought to have been used in the translation of our Lord’s prediction. Now I do not contend that our Translators are right in

their rendering in the particular instance, but I again cite this passage as containing evidence unbiased by Millenarian tendencies, that *nation* is really one of the significations of the word. If, in every case where such a translation would bear *directly* in favour of the view I am now defending, they have adopted one that is different, it certainly strengthens much the argument to be derived from any admission they may indirectly make. Here then, I again remark, as in the case of Beza, the rendering of our Translators in this particular instance proves unquestionably *their conviction*, that the word really has such a signification. Nay, the very impropriety of the translation in this case, if you choose to regard it in that light, only proves more decidedly that such a rendering must have been easily admitted by them as correct, if adopted without their having been compelled to have recourse unto it by the obvious sense of the passage.

It might be highly useful, but would occupy much space, to examine with minuteness many of the passages in the New Testament in which this word is used, apparently in the sense of people or nation. Two or three cases may, however, be noticed.

In that discourse in the temple which led to the delivery of the magnificent prediction now under consideration, the Saviour had denounced vengeance on the Jews as a rebellious people. On the Scribes and Pharisees wo after wo was pronounced, for their hypocrisy, the last of which is in these words: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because ye build the tombs of *the prophets* and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of *our fathers* we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are *the children* of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up, then, the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in *your synagogues*, and persecute them from city to city; that *upon you* may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacha-

rias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon *this generation.*" Mat. xxiii. 29—36.

The last word in this passage is the same which occurs in our Lord's subsequent prediction; and it can scarce be doubted, that here it refers to the Jews only, and not to the whole generation of living men. It has the Saviour's previous denunciations of wo upon that people all included, when he says, "all these things shall come upon *this generation.*" It was they who were "*the children of them which killed the prophets;*" and *to them* the Saviour said, "Fill ye up, then, the measure of *your fathers.*" It was them the Saviour still addressed, as those who should kill His disciples in their "*synagogues.*" In all these circumstances, there is a reference to *the Jews*, and to them only; and it was upon this guilty people,—and not upon the whole living race of men,—that wrath was now denounced for such enormities; "Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon *this generation,*" this race, this people. My idea is farther confirmed by what follows; for the Saviour immediately takes up a lamentation for the punishment entailed by the guilt of "*this generation.*" And does this pathetic address apply to the circumstances of mankind generally? Not at all; its expression of His grief and sympathy is wholly expended on the *Jewish people*; and instead of embracing *the whole generation of living men* over a wide world, his apostrophe only is, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem."

Farther, I would ask, is it true that *all* that Christ now denounced came upon "*this generation*" in the limited sense for which you contend? Is it not the punishment of those very crimes specified by our Lord that the Jews are still suffering? "Behold your House is *left unto you desolate.*" It has continued desolate for many generations, and is so still, and therefore "*all these*" things did not come upon that generation, but it has all come upon that *people* who were addressed.

In another prediction of His Return, our Lord "said unto the disciples, the days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here! or see there! go not after them nor follow them. For as the lightning

that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven; so shall also *the Son of man be IN HIS DAY. But first must He suffer many things and BE REJECTED OF THIS GENERATION.*" Luke xvii. 22—25. It is not my intention at present to insist on the beautiful harmony which there is between this prediction and that which forms the particular subject of immediate investigation; but to confine my attention to what is said of his *rejection*, as confirmatory of the idea attached to "*this generation*." That here also it is the Jewish *people* to whom he refers will appear by attention to several circumstances.

Before this day of the Son of man desired by his disciples, He must first "*be rejected of this generation*." Now, that he was and is rejected by *the Jews as a people*, admits not of doubt. But, rejected as he was by that *nation*, he was not more rejected of *that generation of Jews* than any which has succeeded, but *much less*. We read of "*the many thousands of Jews who believe*," when Paul came up to Jerusalem—nay of the *myriads* of them. Has the success of the gospel been so great among the Jews in any subsequent age, that it would warrant the idea of his having been *peculiarly rejected* of that generation then living. Or is it said the "*generation*" is to be understood more generally, and instead of confining it to *the Jews* to extend it to the whole of mankind then alive? In this sense will your idea of the word better accord with matter of fact? Not at all. So far from the Saviour having been peculiarly rejected of the whole Gentile world in that age, was not the gospel extensively preached, and preached with power—preached with a degree of zeal and success which has not since been equalled? Instead of that generation having *rejected* the Saviour in any peculiar degree, you have once and again recounted the *triumphs* of the cross as being then the most obvious, when you would maintain that our Lord's prediction,—which I regard as even yet unfulfilled,—that the gospel should "*be preached in all the world for a witness*" before *the end* came, had its fulfilment before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Having thus seen the inapplicability of the words to *that generation* in such a sense, observe now its perfect application and beauty when understood of the Jewish *race* or *people*. By them he was indeed rejected—rejected by

them *as a nation*, and for eighteen hundred years, which have since elapsed, he has continued to be rejected by that people of whom our Lord appears to speak. The parallel passage in another gospel proves, indeed, that it is in this sense we are here to understand "*this generation:*" And "he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, *and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes.*" Mark viii. 31. That is, he was to be rejected of the Jewish nation, for these were the supreme authorities among the Jews, constituting, therefore, the representatives of that nation. Now the evangelists, by their severally using the term generation and the Jewish representatives in expressing our Lord's idea, show clearly that "*this generation*" is used in a sense synonymous with "*this people,*" else the expressions could not have been given as recording the same statement.

Our Lord's language here seems also to imply, that when the rejection of this generation shall cease, that then will his glorious coming be visible to all "*as the lightning.*" Now, as this rejection is predicted to cease just at the commencement of the Millennium, it intimates clearly that his Coming will be at the conversion of Israel, when they shall return to their allegiance. And the whole passage may surely be regarded as additional evidence, that the Saviour referred to the continued existence of the Jewish people even till his Return, when he said, "*this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.*" I shall refer to only one other passage in which I think our Lord obviously means *the Jews*, when, using the word under consideration, he speaks of *this generation*. It was on an occasion when the Jewish "*people were gathered thick together,* He began to say, *this* is an evil *generation;* they seek a sign and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign *unto the Ninevites*, so shall also the Son of man be *to this generation.* Luke xi. 29, 30. In these words our Lord appears expressly to compare the *Ninevites* with the *Jews*. It is not the whole people living in the days of the prophet Jonas compared with the whole people living when our Lord thus spake. The comparison evidently is between the *Ninevites* to whom Jonas was sent, and that people who were now tempting the Saviour by asking a sign.

These various passages, in which the word is obviously used in the sense of nation or people, do therefore support the idea that the Saviour, in Mat. xxiv. 34. foretells the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people till His Return.

Although Mr. Faber denies the Coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven to be the Personal Return of Christ, he has done much to correct the misapprehension so generally entertained respecting the Time to which the prophecy relates, and also concerning the meaning of this 34th verse. When, in the First edition of the "Connected View," I expressed my conviction that the word translated "generation" ought to be here rendered "nation" or "people," I was quite unaware that precisely the same view was maintained by this eminent critic, or by any other in the present day. In that author's "Sacred Calendar of Prophecy" it is, however, distinctly and accurately stated. "The original word," he says, "which our translators have rendered generation, has been commonly supposed to denote the then existing generation of men, or *the generation of men* who were contemporary with the Apostles. But the *primary* meaning of the word is *a race or family or nation*: it is only in a secondary sense that it acquires the signification of a single generation of contemporaries. Let it, then," he adds, "in the present passage, be understood in its *primary* and proper sense, and the whole difficulty will vanish; for, in that case, our Lord's declaration will run as follows:—Verily, I say unto you, *this nation* shall not pass away, until all these things shall have been fulfilled."

And, in confirmation of this view, he has appended, as a note, the following satisfactory evidence. "I subjoin the very accurate and satisfactory exposition of the word, which has been given by Scapula.

"Γενεὰ, ἡ, Genus, Progenies. "Οφεί εῦ εἰδῆς ἡμετέρην γενεύν. Homer. Iliad. lib. vi. ver. 150, 151. Ταύτης τοι γενεῖς τε καὶ αἴρατος εὐχόρατος εἶναι. Ibid. lib. vi. ver. 211. Et Philo de vita Mosis. Καταλείπει μὲν πατρίδα καὶ γενεὰν καὶ πατρῶον οἶκον. Expon. etiam, AEtas, Seculum, Scap. Lex. in voc. Γενεά.

"To these authorities," he continues, "may be added an equally decisive one from Eschylus. 'Ως ὀμοφέοντος δαιμονὸς ἐνέβη Περσῶν γενεά. Pers. ver. 912, 913.

"The primary meaning, then, of the word is, *a race or*

family or nation: and, accordingly, it is used in this sense, both by the Seventy, and by the writers of the New Testament. Thus, in Gen. xliii. 7, the Seventy use the word *ȳeved* to express what our translators render *kindred*; and they similarly employ the same word, for the same purpose, in Numb. x. 30, and elsewhere. Thus also, as Beza rightly understands them, the writers of the New Testament use *ȳeved* to denote *a people or nation*, in Matt. xxiii. 36, Luke xxi. 32, xvii. 25, and in other places. In like manner Chrysostom uses the same word to describe the whole collective body of Christians. He styles them *η ȳeved ζητούντων τὸν Κύριον*, *the people or nation of those who seek the Lord*. See Mede's Works, book iv. epist. 12. p. 752."

Sac. Cal. of Prophecy, vol. i. pp. 263, 264.

Dr. Adam Clarke also, (a commentator who will not be suspected of accommodating his interpretation to favour Millenarianism,) gives precisely this idea to the word generation, and understands our Lord to say "*this race*, i. e. the Jews, shall not cease *to be a distinct people* till all the counsels of God, relative to them and the Gentiles, be fulfilled."

My object, in these remarks, you will perceive, has been to ascertain the precise meaning of that word *in the original*, which has been translated "Generation." But I have now to remark, that before building so much of your interpretation of our Lord's prediction of His coming in glory upon the verse under consideration, as fixing its entire fulfilment to the days of those then alive, it might also have been proper to inquire whether the word "generation," even in the translation, never admits of another signification. Without insisting at length on this, the citation of a few passages will be sufficient to prove, that it is sometimes used in a corresponding sense with that already noticed. Is not this the case where it is said, "*there is a generation* that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother? There is *a generation* that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is *a generation*, Oh how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is *a generation* whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." Prov.

xxx. 11—14. The "generations" here evidently mean particular classes of wicked men.

By the Psalmist those who have clean hands and a pure heart—who receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of their salvation, are also called "*the generation* of them that seek Him." (Ps. xxiv.) 4—6.) Again, "God is in the *generation* of the *righteous*." (Ps. xiv. 5.) "A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a *generation*." (Ps. xxvii. 30.) And "*the generation* of the *upright* shall be blessed." (Ps. cxii. 2.) In like manner the apostle Peter, speaking of those "which *believe*," calls them "*a chosen generation*." 1 Pet. ii. 9.

By the prophet Jeremiah, "generation" is used in precisely the same sense, in direct application to the kingdom of Judah. He first addresses them as "Judah," and afterwards beseeches them, "*O generation*." Jer. ii. 28, 31. The same prophet again uses the same word, in the same sense, when it is said, "This is *a nation* that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God," and concerning whom it is added, in the following verse, "*the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation* of his wrath." And it is again immediately repeated in the next verse, "*FOR THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH* have done evil in my sight." Jer. vii. 28—30.

In the song of Moses the children of Israel are expressly called, in prophetic anticipation, "*a crooked and perverse generation*." He does not, in these words, refer to their condition as they existed at the time he spake, but is avowedly looking forward to their conduct in the latter days: "For I know," says he, "that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you *in the latter days*, because ye *will* do evil in the sight of the Lord." Deut. xxxi. 29. xxxii. 5. And in this same song of Moses, in the 20th verse of the last-cited chapter, they are again called "*a very froward generation*, children in whom is no faith;" while, in the 28th verse, they are renewedly called "*a nation void of counsel*."

In reference to our Lord's prediction of His Coming in the clouds of heaven, surely such multiplied instances are sufficient to prove, not only that the original word on which

the whole difficulty has been founded, may without impropriety be viewed in a sense consistent with its reference to His future Personal Return, but also that the very word by which it has unhappily been translated, is itself occasionally used in a similar sense. These citations prove satisfactorily that the word, both as it occurs in the original and in the translation, does signify a race of men, a people, a nation, and that both are so used in reference to the Jews.

With such proofs, I therefore hold it to be indisputable, that when our Lord says, "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," he *may* have intimated that the Jewish people should continue to exist as a separate and distinct race, even while in captivity among the Gentiles, and subjected to every species of oppression, by all the nations among whom they should be mingled. It naturally follows, therefore, that it is not a point to be *assumed*, that our Lord meant to assert that all He had foretold should be accomplished ere forty or fifty years should have elapsed. For if, as I have proved, the word is really used in different senses, it is necessary to show, that the one in which we find it thus often used is *not* that in which it is to be understood in the present instance. The fact of Christ's not having been seen coming in the clouds of heaven before the generation of men then living had died, is itself presumptive evidence that such was not our Lord's prediction. And, accordingly, by attending a little more closely to his language we shall find, that it neither was nor possibly could be his meaning.

For, besides the evidence derived from the use of the term in a different sense in the works of Greek authors, and in numerous passages of the New Testament, there is yet another important argument, of which I must still avail myself, against the idea you attach to "this generation." We have still to inquire, whether such a sense as that on which your objection is founded will really accord with our Lord's statements. Is it really true, then, that *all* he predicted, *prior to making that declaration*, was fulfilled before the men then living had ceased to exist? * Our con-

* The celebrated Mr. Scott, in his Commentary, assumes with marvellous ease, that our Lord here answers only "the former part of the Apostles' question concerning the time when these events

ception of Prophecy may be aided by History, as speculative opinions are often corrected by our knowledge of matters of fact. The generation of men who were living upon the earth when our Lord delivered his prediction has long been consigned to the dust—the destruction of Jerusalem has long found its place in the records of past events—and, for 1700 years, the city itself has been trodden under foot of Gentile nations. Is it then true,—without having recourse to an idea of *double* sense, a scheme for which our Lord himself has made no provision, and which the direct terms of his prediction wholly exclude; a scheme which, even if admitted, is, in so far as the present question is concerned, absolutely self-contradictory,—without such an assumed sense, allow me to ask, *Do you, Reverend Sir, believe it to be true*—with the historic page in view, do you really think our blessed Lord ever meant it to be understood as true—that his coming in the clouds of heaven would take place before the generation of men then upon the earth should cease to live—that at that time he would be seen so coming in power and great glory by all the tribes of the earth, (or even the Jewish tribes only, if you prefer to have it so,)—and that then also he should send forth his angels to gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven—and do you believe He declared that all this should take place, not before, nor in, nor during the destruction of Jerusalem, but “immediately after” its tribulation?

would take place.” By adopting such an idea, I would in this way escape the force of your objection; but although my present inquiry is not relative to the questions of the disciples, but concerning our Lord’s prediction, I must affirm that if our Lord at all answered the *latter* question of his disciples concerning his Return, and the end of the age, that he did so in the magnificent description of his coming in the clouds of heaven, which occupies so large a portion of the preceding discourse. On what principle then his parabolic illustration, when they “shall see all these things,” is to be restricted to “the former part of the apostle’s question” concerning the destruction of the Temple, it is difficult to conceive. However, he proceeds as if this most important point were satisfactorily ascertained, and absolutely settled. But notwithstanding of the distinction he has thus made in the prediction, he still regards it as necessary to restrict “the *primary* interpretation of the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem.” It is, however, not a little remarkable, that he should thus consider it sufficient to restrict what he calls “the *primary* interpretation,” although our Lord gives not the slightest hint of its having more than one.

Nay, putting aside for a time the question concerning the Return of the blessed Son of man, permit me to ask, do you believe that all the other events, included in our Lord's prediction, and uttered before he said "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," were accomplished before those then living had died? There are various statements contained in that prediction, the nature of which you will not dispute, which really were not fulfilled before the grave had received the last survivors. I am perfectly willing that the term of existence allotted them be extended even to that of longevity; but the accommodation will still be insufficient—and that by many hundreds of years—to bring within its little compass the mighty things previously foretold by Christ. Let me then ask if it be true, that within this period the gospel was really "*preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations*"? With a full knowledge of the explanation usually offered—that in the apostolic age the gospel had made very extensive progress,—yet, keeping in view the design expressed by the Saviour, for which the gospel should be preached, "*as a witness*," for myself I dare not make the limitation which the offered explanation demands, and have still to ask of you and others, if it be really true, that *even yet* the gospel has been preached in all the world, for a witness unto "*all nations*"? and whether the complete accomplishment of this work when performed, will not rather mark "*the end of the age*"? *

Before uttering the words I have so long been considering, our Lord had also foretold that the Jews should "be carried captive into all nations;" and again I ask, is it true that this also took place before that generation of living men had ceased to exist? Great as was the *slaughter* of the Jews by the Romans under Titus, and numerous as were his *prisoners*, it was not until after their revolt, to-

* It is not my part to reconcile your inconsistencies, but I do you no injustice in thus reasoning against what you make your direct exposition, and which is indeed essential to your view of the time of the coming of the Son of man, although there have been occasions in which you have incidentally given opposite interpretations. The above view you have often neutralized; and so late as yesterday (May 1st, 1831,) you, in prayer, expressed it as matter of rejoicing "that the gospel *will be* preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations,"—as if the prediction was still unfulfilled.

wards the end of the reign of Adrian, between 130 and 140 of the Christian era, that this prediction was accomplished. It was not till after this repeated ruin of their nation, that the Jews were "led captive into all nations," and dispersed over the face of the earth. Neither will this circumstance, therefore, come within the time of those living when the prediction of our Lord was delivered.

But there is yet farther evidence in the prophecy itself, that the Saviour, when he said "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," did not mean to affirm, that the whole prophecy should have received its accomplishment within a single life-time. That prediction previously foretold that Jerusalem shall be "trodden down of the Gentiles UNTIL *the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Luke xxi. 24—32. Now I unhesitatingly affirm that whatever be the right interpretation of the 34th verse, yours must be wrong; for our blessed Lord never could declare that a prediction of events extending at least over 1800 years, should *all* be fulfilled before those then living had ceased to exist. Yet your interpretation of the prophecy founded on the verse in question, necessarily involves that absurdity. Endeavour to conceal it as you may, it is not a matter to be questioned, that the words by which you felt constrained to maintain that the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, by the same kind of interpretation will necessarily require it to be believed that *the times of the Gentiles* should have been *fulfilled* at the same early period. But the times of the Gentiles are *not yet* fulfilled, for Jerusalem is still trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and these times will not be fulfilled so long as this is the case, for "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until *the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" I therefore appeal to you, and to all who know the Lord, whether He *could* afterwards mean to affirm in the sense which you attached to His words, "this *generation* shall not pass till *all* these things be fulfilled"?

With the same design, I again ask, whether any "Kingdom of God," either spiritual or external, visible or invisible, which was not established *prior* to the destruction of Jerusalem, has since been erected; so that concerning it our Saviour could have said of the destruction of Jerusalem,

"When ye see these things *come to pass*; know ye that the kingdom of God *is nigh at hand*?" Luke xxi. 31. Was there any kingdom which had not been erected when the Saviour uttered the words just quoted—any kingdom that was not erected when, at the day of Pentecost, the disciples first enjoyed those spiritual gifts which were to qualify them for their Master's work—that was not even erected when myriads of Jews embraced Jesus as the promised Messiah, and when the gospel had been so extensively propagated that you have once and again affirmed it to have been preached in all the world?—Was there any "Kingdom of God," which had not been erected even after the spiritual kingdom of Christ had made such triumphant progress, of which our Lord could yet declare that before those then living had died, and at the destruction of Jerusalem, it was only "*nigh at hand*"?

And farther, What "redemption" was enjoyed, either by the Jews as a nation, or by the disciples of Christ in particular, which could be promised by our Lord as to take place within the term of existence of his contemporaries, and as only *drawing nigh* when the destruction of Jerusalem began to come to pass? (Luke xxi. 28.) Were the Jews, as a nation, called to *look and lift up their heads*, while misery and desolation approached? or did his Jewish disciples then enjoy any "redemption" in which *they* were to exult. No; much they suffered even in that early period, but they enjoyed no such redemption; and in the very destruction of Jerusalem they lost all that they possessed. Compelled to flee in haste to the mountains, they escaped only with their lives. Their whole property was left as a spoil to the Gentile oppressor, or consumed by the devouring flame; and the House of their God, which they held more dear, was laid waste and pillaged by the fierce idolator. They regarded not as their "redemption" an event so disastrous, and which was followed by manifold persecutions and much distress. Their redemption was not, therefore, an event "*nigh at hand*" at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor has any thing since taken place that can be regarded as that object of hope to which our Lord could allude, when he said, "*when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh;*" and this having been delivered

prior to that declaration which is the subject of immediate inquiry, also sets aside the force of your objection to a more extended and consistent interpretation of the whole prediction.

From all the circumstances noticed, I therefore infer the absolute incorrectness of that exposition, which would confine the fulfilment of the entire prediction to the term of existence of any of those alive when it was uttered. And not only so; but from the multifarious evidence adduced, I believe our Saviour's meaning in the expression to be, that notwithstanding of his having just predicted unparalleled sufferings to which the Jewish nation should be subjected — of their being carried captive into all nations, and having their capital laid waste and subject to the power of ruthless spoilers — that still *as a distinct nation or people*, they should yet continue to exist till his return. And as if it were almost incredible that a nation *could* survive such complicated distress, he adds the assurance, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

That the explanation thus offered, in so far as it is agreeable to the mind and word of God, may be blessed to your soul, is the sincere prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Yours in Christian love, &c.

LETTER IV.

BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE SAVIOUR'S PREDICTION OF HIS RETURN.

REVEREND SIR,

In my last Letter I considered at much length the meaning of the words “this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” Having, as I trust, thus completely removed the supposed necessity of limitation on which you insisted for the entire fulfilment of the prophecy many centuries ago, and having shown the inconsistency of such a view with various statements contained in

the prediction itself, may I now solicit your attention while I endeavour to present a brief, but, as I conceive, a more correct exposition of the whole, as narrated by the evangelist Matthew. By the removal of that great obstacle which has so often been put in the way of all consistent interpretation, we will be better prepared for understanding the Saviour's real design, and, by seeing the harmony and distinctness of its parts, you may more readily receive the evidence to be afterwards adduced of its reference to the pre-millennial return of the Redeemer. In this I shall, in so far as necessary, freely avail myself of my own remarks already before the public, with such additions as careful and repeated examinations have suggested.

For the last time, as we have seen, Jesus being in the temple, exposed with unsparing severity the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. He reproves them for their hardness of heart, in persecuting the prophets and rejecting Himself, and denounces upon them coming judgments. He then utters the tender expostulation and lamentation, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! [Observe what follows.] Behold your House is left unto you *desolate*, FOR I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Mat. xxiii. 37 – 39. He shall not be seen of them “henceforth” till a certain time. As they then saw Him *personally*, so their not seeing Him “henceforth,” for a specific period, must be in the same sense, and therefore implies His personal absence in the interim. But the duration of this his absence is coeval with that of the Temple’s desolation: “Behold your House is left unto you desolate, FOR, [the reason or ground of its being so, “for”] I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth.” Still, however, this desolation of their House occasioned by the Saviour’s absence is only for a limited time, “TILL” they shall call Him *Blessed*. This clearly refers not directly to the individuals immediately addressed. These were the Scribes and Pharisees, on whom He had just denounced a “woe” of condemnation, as men who could not “escape the damnation of hell.” ver. 33. *Never*, therefore, will such call Him

“blessed.” They would not do so at the overthrow of their city; they will not do so when raised to punishment. But they were the rulers, and therefore the representatives of the Jewish *nation*, who, at their conversion, will, indeed, *bless* that Saviour they have so long execrated: “ye shall not see me, henceforth, till ye shall say, *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*”

Having delivered this important prediction to the Jews, of His absence for a time and the desolation of their Temple, the Saviour now departed from its precincts; and, followed by his disciples, (ruminating on the import of the denunciation just uttered,) He retired to the mount of Olives, the place of his frequent resort, and which commanded a fine view of the Temple, being directly opposite the hill on which it stood: “And Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the Temple.” (xvii. 1.) “Master,” said one, “see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” (Mark xiii. 1.) “Goodly stones” indeed, some of which, as mentioned by Josephus, were of the whitest marble, and upwards of 67 feet long. From its beauty, and the sacred purpose for which it was designed, and perhaps also from its great strength, they were unwilling to believe it would be destroyed. It was indeed a magnificent structure: and, as they contemplated its threatened desolation, they were ready to exclaim, in the pathetic language perhaps, as also in the spirit, of prophetic lamentation, “Our holy and beautiful House, where our fathers praised thee!” They therefore point to its superlative grandeur, as if imploring its preservation from the impending destruction. This, however, only calls forth a repetition of the afflicting prediction: “And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” ver. 2. This solemn asseveration of their Master at once negatived their hopes, and prevented farther opportunity for the preservation of the Temple. Assured with certainty of its fate, and remembering the prediction He had so recently delivered within its walls, they now inquire particularly concerning both the commencement and termination of the predicted desolation: “And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately,

saying, *Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*"

By recalling to our remembrance what Jesus had foretold before leaving the Temple—a prediction which would make no transient impression on the minds of His Jewish disciples—we shall be better prepared to understand the important questions now addressed to Him, and the grounds which suggested their combination. Unconnected as these questions must at first sight appear, they are, I humbly apprehend, both naturally and intimately connected. The Saviour had just assured them of the destruction of the Temple: and, as I have already shown, had shortly before predicted its continued desolation *till* the time of *His coming*. The disciples, therefore, here first ask "*when*" its destruction will take place: "*when shall these things be?*"—*when shall the Temple be utterly "thrown down"?* and they next inquire concerning *the termination* of this desolation, inquiring for the sign of the Saviour's "*coming*," which, from his prediction in the Temple, they had been taught to connect with the close of that desolation: "*Behold your House is left unto you desolate, FOR, I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh.*" But, in their second question, the disciples also connect the time of his "*coming*" with "*the end of the world*"—or *age*, as you admit the word should be rendered. Nothing had previously been said by the Saviour, at least nothing is here recorded as previously said, of the "*end of the age*." But the disciples were not ignorant of Prophecy, and they were able to observe and attend to its intimations. And thus it was, I have no doubt, they learned to connect *the coming* of the Lord with *the end of the age*. From a prophecy given by Daniel, they had already ascertained the precise era of Christ's appearance in the world; and, by their acquaintance with this same prediction, and the remembrance of what had so recently fallen from their Master's lips, they would be enabled to connect the time of Christ's Return with the end of the age. Daniel had foretold that, after the Messiah was "*cut off*," the City and the Sanctuary should be destroyed by the people of the Prince who should come against Judea; and that these he should "*make desolate, even until THE CONSUMMATION*"

or *end*. Dan. ix. 27. Now, as the Saviour had himself predicted that this desolation would continue till the time of His Return, when the Jews will acknowledge and bless Him as the sent of the Lord, his disciples, equally desirous of information concerning both, ask, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?”

From the 4th to the 14th verse, the Saviour gives them a general outline of what should take place up to “*the end*” of the age, cautioning them against false Christs who should arise, and warning them against the supposition, that when they should hear of wars and rumours of wars, that this “*end*” had arrived;—“but the end is *not yet*.” Great as was the distress entailed upon the Jews by the invasion of the Romans, and by the famines and pestilences and earthquakes which occurred at that time, He shows them that this was but the commencement of long continuing affliction to which the Jews should afterwards be exposed,—“all these are *the beginning* of sorrows.” ver. 8. Much was to be endured by the impenitent Jews *before THE END arrived*. But upon his own followers our Lord enjoins that for all these things they “be not troubled.” In the 9th verse he predicts the persecutions under Pagan Rome: “*Then* shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you.” This being narrated in order posterior to the evils which were connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, related in the foregoing verses, I understand to be the continued chronological order of events, and which form the next great sign. The true friends of the Redeemer were to be persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles, being, as here intimated, “hated of all nations” for the name of Christ. Accordingly, they suffered dreadfully at the hands of the Roman emperors in the noted persecutions of that early period. In the 10th verse, there next appears a prediction of *Papal* persecutions, as succeeding those of Pagan Rome. “*Then* shall many be offended, and shall betray *one another*, and shall *hate* one another.” This is not the work of avowed enemies, but of professing friends; they betray and hate not mutual and open foes, but “*one another*.” In the following verse I believe the Saviour alludes to the Papal Antichrist, in the continued succession of Popes, as the “many false prophets,” who should rise and “deceive

many;" assuming a wicked and idolatrous power in the Church of Christ, and by the establishment of whose abominations "iniquity shall abound," and "the love of many shall wax cold." These "false *prophets*" are not to be confounded with the "false *Christ*s," mentioned in the 5th verse. Still viewing the prediction as advancing chronologically, I observe that these "prophets" are mentioned as being in the Christian church, while the false Christ's deceived the Jews only. In the 13th verse he exhorts to steadfastness in maintaining the truth, and in the 14th adds, "And this gospel of The Kingdom shall be preached in all the world * *for a witness unto all nations*, [not that it shall have been universally received by them for 1000 years,] *and THEN shall the END come*"—the "end of the age" about which they were inquiring.

Such appears to be the natural and proper exposition of this part of the chapter; although you laboured hard to make this *end* of the world, or age, appear to be the destruction of the Jewish polity. But, besides that Christianity had made considerable progress before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, there is no authority whatever, for supposing that event the termination of "the age,"—that "*consummation*" or *end* being placed by Daniel *not* at the *commencement*, but at the *close* of the *desolation* of the city and sanctuary, and therefore as preceding the Millennium: "he shall *make desolate even UNTIL the Consummation.*" Dan. ix. 27. It is also to be remembered, that in the latter question of the disciples, this *end* of the *age* was connected with the coming of Christ: "What shall be the sign of thy coming *and* of the end of the age?"

Having thus given them a very condensed view of events up to the end of the age, the Saviour, in the 15th verse, returns, and becoming more minute in the specification of particulars, points to the duration of the afflictions upon

* On this verse, the Rev. Mr. Scott remarks, the word rendered *world* "properly signifies the whole *habitable* earth, whether inhabited or not; but it is sometimes used," he adds, "for the Roman empire, and is by many restricted to that sense in this place, *perhaps improperly.*" The view which I take of these verses as a *chronological epitome* of the great events which were to precede the end of the age, as well as the purpose for which the gospel is to be preached, leave me without doubt that the restriction *is* improper.

the Jews, and gives farther instructions to be recorded for the guidance and direction of those living in the periods to which His predictions referred, and who were more particularly interested : “ When ye, THEREFORE, [this being *an inference* relative to their conduct drawn from the former chronological part of His discourse—“ *when ye therefore*”] shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand,) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains—let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house ; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.”

The parenthetical injunction for the reader to *understand* clearly implies a danger of mistake ; and the neglect of this very warning has probably occasioned much of the confusion in which commentators have involved the chapter. As the prediction of the prophet, from which I have already quoted, not only shows to what our Lord immediately refers, but will also assist us in another part of the inquiry, I shall now cite fully the passage to which our attention is thus particularly called : “ Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven [prophetic] weeks, and threescore and two weeks : the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks [of years] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself ; and *the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary* : and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week ; and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and *for the overspreading of abominations he shall make desolate*, even *until the consummation*, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,”—or “ *desolator.*” (marg.) Dan. ix. 25—27.

My only remark on this, at present, is, that the prophet evidently refers to the Romans as “ the people of the prince that shall come,” and to the destruction of Jerusalem and

the temple by that of “the City and the Sanctuary,” together with the continuance of their desolation “for the overspreading of abominations.” But although the Saviour clearly refers to this destruction of the city, and warns his followers to escape when they should see the period arrive, it is difficult to conceive how any should have thought of applying to that event what He afterwards states respecting his *Coming*, in answer to the second question of his disciples. Such a misapplication is the more surprising, as He has carefully guarded against false ideas of the nature of his coming. Having predicted a period of the greatest tribulation that ever was or shall be, He warns them, in the 24th verse, against false Christs and false prophets who shall arise, and adds, “*Wherefore*, if they shall say unto you, Behold He is in the Desert, go not forth: Behold He is in the secret chambers, believe it not; **For**, [this is the reason why they are not to go into the desert seeking Him, “*for*”] as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” When He *comes*, therefore, it will be in no secret influence on the soul; no mere display of power in the infliction of judgments; no coming to be known only in a chamber or witnessed only in a desert—but a bright and glorious manifestation of himself, instantaneous and *SEEN of all*,—as the lightning which “cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west.”

Having warned them against mistake or deception with respect to the *nature* of his coming, the Saviour proceeds more particularly to inform his disciples *when* this glorious event shall take place: “*Immediately after the tribulation of those days*, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and *then* shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and *then* shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN*, [or, as in the parallel gospel by Luke, (xxi. 27.) “in a cloud,”] with power and great glory: *and he shall send his angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and *they shall gather together his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” His Second coming will therefore be very different from his First appearance.

It will now be with power and great glory, as frequently predicted by the prophets, and by some of them so magnificently described. It is that coming for which his disciples looked with such desire and with such delightful anticipations. His great work of humiliation being past, he now comes to enjoy his visible triumph over Satan, and to share it with his chosen, for “ He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

In order, therefore, to know the period of our Saviour’s return, it is only necessary to ascertain *when* “ the tribulation” here spoken of *shall cease*. For this we are furnished with three keys. The first may be found in the passage already quoted from the prophecies of Daniel. We there learn, that “ *unto the end of the war* desolations are determined,” and that, “ for the overspreading of abominations,” the city and Sanctuary shall *continue* to be made desolate, “ *even until the consummation*, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,”—or, (as corrected in the margin.) “ upon the *desolator*.” It is to this continuance of the desolation, I apprehend, our attention is especially directed by the parenthetical warning of the Saviour or Evangelist, “ whoso readeth let him understand;”—the full knowledge of its *duration* being necessary in order to the understanding of the prediction of his Return, “ immediately after the tribulation of those days,” at its termination. The “ *consummation*” has not yet arrived. God’s controversy, or “ war,” with his ancient people has not yet ceased; nor has “ that determined” been wholly poured upon its objects, whether reading “ desolate,” it is referred to the Jews; or reading “ desolator,” it is referred to those by whom they have been oppressed. But, as we have already seen, “ the end,” or “ *consummation*,” will come when the gospel has been “ preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations;” and when the city and Sanctuary cease to be made “ desolate.” God’s controversy with his ancient people must cease before the Millennium, for then he shall have returned to them “ with mercies;” and this is to be preceded by the infliction of dreadful judgments upon their enemies. The Saviour’s return being “ *immediately* after the tribu-

lation of those days" must therefore be before the Millennium.

In the 21st verse, we have the second source of evidence, in the extent of the tribulation by which the coming of Christ shall be preceded : " For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be; and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Now as there cannot be two tribulations, each the greatest that ever was, this period cannot yet have arrived, for we learn from Daniel (xii. 1.) that this greatest tribulation is to be at the period of the restoration of Israel: " And at that time,"—at the destruction of the Ottoman empire, predicted in the last verse of the preceding chapter,—" And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, *and there shall be a time of trouble, such as NEVER WAS since there was a nation, EVEN TO THAT SAME TIME;* and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Here then we find that the time of the greatest trouble, *up to that period*, is to be at the time of the restoration of Israel, the children of Daniel's people, when Michael the prince stands up in their behalf. It seems, therefore, a misapplication of our Lord's prediction of this *greatest* tribulation to refer it to the destruction of Jerusalem, although in Matthew's gospel it may have some appearance of being connected with the prophecy relative to that event. But in the gospel of Luke, to which I shall shortly advert, it is to be observed that the coming of Christ is distinctly placed subsequent to the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles. I apprehend, however, that our Lord, having foretold the near destruction of Jerusalem and the troubles connected with it, carries forward the views of believers to the day of the Lord,—the long-desired Sabbath,—and to the more dreadful tribulation at its commencement, which he contrasts with that at the destruction of Jerusalem. This, I think, is that " Sabbath," and that " winter" or tempest," as the word signifies, (see Acts xxvii. 10.) concerning which the Saviour enjoins believing Jews to pray their flight be not in it. In this as in other cases the prophecy, having

reference to the time of the Saviour's return, is addressed to the disciples for the instruction of their brethren in all ages. The *flight* to which he refers appears to be that already noticed, when "all nations" shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle after the restoration of Israel, when, says the prophet Zechariah, "ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; and [as in our Lord's own prophecy,] the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Zech. xiv. 1—5. This being in a time of tribulation so much greater than was even that at the destruction of Jerusalem, the Saviour probably directs His disciples of the Jewish nation—to whom the prophecy was given, and to whose circumstances much of it relates—to pray that they be not involved in it.

There are various reasons which constrain me to think that it is at the 19th verse our Lord concludes his directions concerning the conduct of the disciples at the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the 20th directs attention forward to the greater tribulation immediately preceding His coming. It is at the time of this "winter," or *tempest*, that "*then* shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." Matt. xxiv. 20, 21. This time of *greatest* tribulation, as has been shown, is however to be at the restoration of Israel, (Dan. xii. 1,) and therefore could not be referred to by our Lord, as at the destruction of Jerusalem formerly. It is evidently the same that is predicted, Rev. xvi. 18. It is spoken of by our Lord, as just noticed, to be a time of such great tribulation, that but for the elect's sake, "*no flesh* should be saved." This, while it accords fully with the predictions concerning the time of trouble at the commencement of the Millennium, does not appear at all to apply to the destruction of Jerusalem, in which *the Jews only* were involved. Again, the period of trouble referred to by our Lord is to be *shortened* "for the elect's sake." Neither does this, however, correspond with the circumstances connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, from which the Christians had escaped *before* its calamities commenced, and whose escape, therefore, (into which it is explained) did not depend on the *shortening* of that trouble. The "tribulation" of which our Lord speaks, as being

"immediately" preceding His coming, must be still future, and is only referable to the unparalleled troubles at the close of the present Gentile dispensation.

The return of Christ at the restoration of Israel is rendered farther evident on attending to the parallel passage of the evangelist Luke, who, instead of referring us to Daniel, simply embodies in few words the information we have already obtained from that prophet: "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people; and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" And then *follow* the signs of Christ's return, and the account of the coming itself as given by Matthew: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. *And THEN shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*" Luke xxi. 23—27. Jerusalem still is "*trodden down of the Gentiles,*" and therefore the coming of the Son of man is an event yet future. But we have the full assurance of the Saviour's verity that "*immediately after the tribulation of those days,*" and after certain celestial signs, that then shall be seen the Son of man coming in great glory.

These remarks are designed not merely to direct attention to the precise period of our Lord's return, but also to counteract an erroneous opinion too generally entertained, that Christ Himself, in some sense, applies to the destruction of Jerusalem, what he declares of his Personal Coming in the clouds of heaven, when he shall *be seen so coming* of all the kindreds of the earth. Such an opinion can only be accounted for on the supposition of the total oversight of those various statements by which it is completely refuted. But indeed the language itself in which the Coming is announced, expressly excludes the possibility of any such construction. Even if the miseries attending the destruction of Jerusalem, rather than any subsequent to that event, had been "*the tribulation*" here spoken of, it is still to be observed that the coming of the Lord was not to be "*in*"

that tribulation—not even *contemporaneously*, but—“immediately AFTER” it, whatever the *tribulation* itself may be. But, as has been proved, this refers to future times; to which our attention must still be directed as the period IMMEDIATELY *after* which, or at the Restoration of Israel, when Jerusalem has ceased to be trodden down of the Gentiles, that then the coming of our Lord shall be gloriously realized, as here declared by Himself and uniformly predicted by the prophets.

Again, on the supposition that Christ was not to return till *after* the Millennium, it might well appear surprising that He should not have *included* that long term of holiness and happiness among the signs which precede his coming. After the world had for thousands of years been torn by dissension, and been the scene of every wickedness, such a lengthened period of universal purity and peace must have proved a very notable sign. But, as has been observed, the words “immediately after the tribulation of those days,” prove that the coming of the Saviour shall precede the commencement of the Millennium, and therefore its existence could not have been given as a sign of his approach.

“Now learn a parable of the fig-tree,” said the Saviour: “When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So, likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [marg. “He”] is near, even at the doors.” In these eventful times let not the illustrative warning pass unheeded. While nations are convulsed, and thrones are overturned; while there is “upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity,” and the most sagacious politicians are in fear of “those things which are coming upon the earth,” let not the Christian lose sight of the *pole-star* of Prophecy, which alone casts a steady light on the events of futurity—near as they may be and mighty in their result. Let us all observe with interest the Lord’s doings on behalf of his ancient people, in whose holy prosperity is bound up the destinies of a regenerated world. Think of the Saviour’s gracious assurance unto them, as connected with his Coming, “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” ver. 32—35.

Such is a brief exposition of the prophecy, and some of

the grounds on which it is formed. The principal event it contains is afterwards illustrated by a variety of parables to which I do not, however, at present refer, as they shall afterwards be made the subject of minute investigation.

That the Lord, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, and who alone by his Spirit can convince and illuminate, may lead you into all truth, and give you grace to acknowledge, and fidelity to teach, whatever He imparts, is the sincere prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Yours very truly, &c.

LETTER V.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN FARTHER PROVED TO BE AT THE CLOSE OF THE TIMES OF THE GEN- TILES, OR RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

REVEREND SIR,

In the preceding Letter I presented you with a Brief Exposition of our Lord's predictions, as understood by me, with some few remarks in its vindication. It differs from that given by you in two important particulars, —the *time* and the *nature* of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. To many important particulars, in reference to both, I have yet to solicit your farther attention, in support of the view already exhibited. The present Letter shall, therefore, be occupied with additional arguments in proof of the *Time* of that event being the one already stated.

In my Harmonized View of the prediction, as recorded by the different evangelists formerly given, I placed the Coming of the Son of man as *subsequent to the times of the Gentiles*. In this, you are aware, I followed the arrangement of the evangelist Luke, who, so far from identifying that coming with the destruction of Jerusalem, or placing it either in or at or immediately after that event, in his account, interposes between them a period which he terms “ the times

of the Gentiles." Of the *duration* of this period he does not indeed speak, but information is supplied by which it may now be pretty nearly ascertained. It is a period which may be measured by that of Judah's dispersion and oppression. The times of the Gentiles was to be a period during which the Jews would be subjugated by other nations, and Jerusalem itself, the capital of their land, be degraded and under their control. Now as the evangelist places the coming of the Son of man immediately after this, it is of importance that we examine it with attention.

It is to be remarked, then, that all this *followed* the destruction of Jerusalem, the desolation of which the disciples were informed should be nigh when they saw it " compassed with armies." ver. 20. There was then to be "great distress in the land and wrath upon this people," and they were to "fall by the edge of the sword," a prediction which, you know, was fearfully realized. Still, besides and after all this, they were to be "led away captive into all nations," and Jerusalem was to be "trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24. And on this Scott remarks, "the remains of that devoted nation have been dispersed as captives, or in a most dependent oppressed condition, throughout the kingdoms of the earth; and yet have been preserved a distinct people for above 1700 years." "Jerusalem has ever since been 'trodden under foot,' or *governed with despotic sway* by the Gentiles; by the Romans, Saracens, Mamelukes, Franks, and Turks, who possess it to this day. A law was made by the Roman victors forbidding any Jew to dwell in their ancient inheritance, or to come within sight of Jerusalem; the foundations of the old city were ploughed up; a new city was at length builded by the conquerors, called *Ælia*, and an idolatrous temple was erected in the place where the temple of Jehovah had stood. In the days of Constantine, and afterwards, the city was indeed possessed by Christians among others; but they were chiefly the *Gentile* converts, and the Jews were driven thence with great severity." So fully was this part of the prophecy verified!

The times of the Gentiles will, however, come to an end, and when these times are fulfilled, and Jerusalem ceases to be under the oppression and power of the Gentiles, having

been restored to its rightful owners, then arrives the period of the coming of the Lord. But of all this you took no notice, scarcely ever making the least reference to the period at which Luke places the coming of the Son of man. On one occasion only did you even allude to this part of his narrative, and then you asserted that at the Restoration of Israel the times of the Gentiles *will not* be fulfilled; but that then the Gentile fulness will be brought in. It was indeed a hasty, a very unguarded assertion to make; and shows how little you had availed yourself of aid from the statements of this evangelist, who clearly intimates the contrary. Do you ask any proof? I reply, that as Jerusalem shall *continue* to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles *until* their times are fulfilled, that this necessarily implies the fulfilment of these times when that oppression shall have ceased. At the Restoration of Israel, you allow Jerusalem will revert to them, this therefore will be the period “until” which it is trodden down of the Gentiles, and as it is to continue in that state until the times of the Gentiles *are* fulfilled, the very regaining of it by the Jews will therefore demonstrate the accomplishment of these times.

But on the occasion alluded to, you also affirmed that it is no where said that the Coming of the Son of man was to be subsequent to the times of the Gentiles being fulfilled; but that Luke, after foretelling the continued desolation upon the Jews, *goes back* to speak of the destruction of Jerusalem as the Coming of the Lord. To this, you are indeed necessarily shut up by the view you have given of the coming of the Son of man. For if it can be proved from Luke that these are two distinct events, then must it follow that your interpretation of the prediction as recorded by Matthew was incorrect. Now let me request you to read again the passage by Luke, and then to say whether such an interpretation has the most distant appearance of propriety. Having in the plainest language referred to Jerusalem’s being “ compassed with armies,” and having enjoined the friends of the Saviour then to leave the city, its desolation being nigh, the evangelist next advances to give directions about their escape; then having foretold the awful afflictions which should be entailed upon the Jews at that time, he *proceeds*, chronologically *hitherto*, you will confess, to

predict their long captivity among all nations, which followed the overthrow of their civil polity, and next intimates their continuance in this state "till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." He then gives intimation of signs to be in the sun, moon, and stars, among the heavenly bodies, and distress among the nations on the earth; "*and THEN,*" he adds, "*shall they see the Son of man Coming in a cloud* with power and great glory." Luke xxi. 20—27. Now, I ask, who could imagine that the evangelist, in this latter part of the prediction, is not proceeding with his narrative in the same regular chronological order which he follows in what immediately precedes? Still more, may I ask, who can suppose that after he has already given a plain and direct intimation of the desolation of Jerusalem, and after proceeding in language equally precise, with a narrative of events for 1800 years after that catastrophe, and appears to be still proceeding with the narrative of events which follow, that instead of this, he is now returning, and that without any intimation of his design, or any circumstance from which it can at all be inferred—returning to *envelope in a figure*, if the Coming of the Son of man is to be so named, events which he had already plainly foretold?

That the destruction of Jerusalem was not the coming of the Son of man, is I think thus evident from this fact, that after the former had been predicted, the latter is foretold as something altogether distinct, and with many important circumstances intervening. Nor can the one be considered as an explanation of the other, for they do not occur in connection, but at a distance from each other, without having any thing to lead to such an idea, but the reverse. Even were there no evidence directly in proof of the Coming of the Son of man, being at the close of the times of the Gentiles, still your application of it to the destruction of Jerusalem is altogether arbitrary. As well might the captivity which followed, or any other of the events which have since intervened, be called the Coming of the Son of man with power and great glory. There is no reason which can be adduced for referring it to the destruction of Jerusalem that may not, with more than equal propriety, be advanced for applying it to any event which happened "after" it. But no unbiased reader could entertain any other idea, than that the evangelist meant to intimate that the Coming

of the Son of man was an event to succeed the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles. Besides, it is to be observed, that this is not introduced *as an explanation* of any thing already declared, but as something *additional*. This is clearly implied in the use of the conjunction, “*AND there shall be signs,*” &c. which *succeed* the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles, and precede the Coming of the Son of man.*

I therefore repeat that there is not a single circumstance in the narrative of this evangelist which can naturally lead to the idea that in predicting this Coming of the Son of man, the Saviour is *going back* to speak in this *new* form of the destruction of Jerusalem merely; but that having predicted that event, he carries forward the view in an unbroken chronological order beyond it in the successive calamities which should befall the Jews, and their continued captivity till the Coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven. If this were not the evangelist’s design, I think his readers must necessarily have mistaken it; since by narrating the *preceding* events in the precise order in which they have occurred, he, by this very circumstance, leads to the expectation that those succeeding will be so also. Surely in such a case, had he meant to be otherwise understood when he reaches the 25th verse, he would have given some intimation of this; and this idea is greatly strengthened by observing that when he really does make such a departure as you suppose, from this regular order, he gives express intimation of the fact. Observe how carefully this is attended to in the 12th verse, “*but BEFORE all these, they shall lay their hands on you.*”

Let us now attend a little more particularly to the time of the Coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven,

* Mede, as quoted by Mr. Cunningham in his Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets, (p. 230.) understands the word “*and*” to be here used for *then*: “*Then shall there be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;*” and it is really so used in the verse immediately preceding; “*there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*” Propriety seems therefore to require that we understand the evangelist still in the same sense, when he immediately adds, “*And there shall be signs in the sun,*” &c.

as declared in the gospel by *Matthew*. As both evangelists were equally inspired, if I be correct in understanding Luke to place that Coming at the close of the times of the Gentiles, then to the same period will it be referred by Matthew, how different soever may be the form in which the intimation is conveyed.

There also we are supplied with a *chronology*, and in this inquiry, it will be of the very highest importance to keep in view the important fact which I have already illustrated, that Matthew's *chronology* is given, from the 5th to the 14th verses inclusive, before at all *describing* the glorious advent of the Saviour. Much as it has been neglected, this I take to be the *grand CHRONOLOGICAL KEY to the whole REMAINING portion of this magnificent prediction*, in which the various events are so minutely described, and so fully illustrated. The disciples in their second question take for granted that the Coming of Christ is to be at the end of the age, and ask one sign for both. The Saviour having given them intimation of the rise of false Christs, which shortly afterwards occurred, leads on their attention to the rumours of approaching war, which he informs them "must come to pass." And here mark the note of Chronology ; "*but THE END is not yet.*" The end of the age is the object of the disciples' solicitude, since with it comes their Lord's return ; and it is the point to which the Saviour designs ultimately to lead their attention ; but lest they should have been in danger of supposing that the approaching war would terminate the age, He warns them that even when this has come to pass, "*THE END is not yet.*" ver 4. Having in the next verse made more particular mention of the wondrous events which took place about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, he again cautions them that these did not indicate the termination of the age ; on the contrary, all these are only "*the beginning of sorrows.*" ver. 8.

Advancing now in this chronological narrative of events towards the end of the age, our Lord specifies the next important sign after the destruction of Jerusalem. This he again does in terms sufficiently indicating its chronological character, as succeeding the events last specified; "*THEN shall they deliver you up to be afflicted.*" My present object is not so much to refer to the fulfilment of this in the

early persecutions of Pagan Rome, as to point attention to the *order* in which these events are predicted, and their regular succession as implied in the terms used. Having already foretold the circumstances or signs of one particular period; the next are intimated as “then” to take place. I have, in the Brief Exposition offered of the chapter, referred to the fulfilment of the verse quoted in the precise order which it here occupies in the leading events connected with the church of Christ. Without therefore, further insisting on this, but simply reverting to the chronological note with which it is introduced, I again remark that the next verse is introduced in precisely the same manner: “*And THEN shall many be offended, &c.* With what regularity and precision does the Saviour advance in his notification of the successive signs which lead to the termination of the age! Circumstances of prominence and of greatest interest to the church, and accessible to the observation of every individual member, are selected, and their succession marked by special reference, until the whole are set before us, having as the last the preaching of the gospel, “in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and *THEN shall the end come.*”*

Thus in a few verses, by prominent marks which may easily be recognized in the History of the Church, has the Saviour extended his signs over a period of 1800 years. The more I contemplate this part of the Chapter, the more am I impressed with its importance; and the more do I admire the beauty, simplicity, and precision of the statements

* Mr. Faber in one part of his Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, has referred to this preaching of the Gospel to all nations, as accomplished before the destruction of Jerusalem. Vol. I. p. 201. But in the same volume, he very distinctly applies it to present times. He thus paraphrases the verse: “This gospel of the Kingdom must first be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; not merely throughout the Roman empire, but unto every nation of the habitable globe. Then, and not till then, shall come that end of the age, and with it the advent of the Son of man, respecting which you inquire.

“Now,” he adds, “according to such an explanation of the language used by Christ, it is evident that *an universality of the preaching of the gospel* is an indication, that the end of the great prophetic age is near at hand: And with this indication, both the Calendar of prophecy, and *the present state of the world*, exactly agree.” *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 244.

it contains, and of their adaptation to the purpose for which they were given. They are signs of a wide and general prevalence, in or concerning the church; and, being of a moral nature, are within the comprehension of every Christian.

It is not until the evangelist has brought down this summary view of the great leading events to "the end" of the age, that he presents our Lord's specific directions to the disciples concerning their conduct at the destruction of Jerusalem, and gives them minute and specific information of the Coming of the Lord. These are the two great events which the disciples embrace in their questions; and the Saviour having foretold all the signs by which both should be preceded, he now returns to give directions relative to the duties they involve.

You objected to the interpretation I have just given of the first part of the chapter, on the ground that the view offered of the various events specified being *successive*, destroyed *the unity* of the prophecy. But how is the unity of a prediction in any way impaired by its being considered chronological in its details? It is no departure from unity that Daniel predicted the desolation of Jerusalem and the Sanctuary as *following*, in point of time, what he had foretold of the Messiah's being cut off. Dan. ix. 26, 27. Indeed, if to view the events mentioned by our Lord as *successive*, be destructive of the unity of the prophecy, then is your own interpretation chargeable with this very fault. You yourself do not consider the various signs, of false Christs, of wars, of famines, of pestilences, of earthquakes, of persecutions, of apostasy, of treachery, of hatred, of false prophets, of the abounding of iniquity, of the waning of Christian love, and the universal preaching of the gospel, as events which all happened at one and the same time. You regard them indeed as having all been fulfilled prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; but this is by no means the same thing as if you should assert that they were all fulfilled synchronically. And if the unity of the prophecy is still unbroken, with such a view of succession, then I cannot perceive how it should be accounted so, by a view which merely regards them as continuing gradually to be fulfilled for a *longer* period of time. The difference between us is, that while you admit of short intervals as having elapsed between the events pre-

dicted, I consider these intervals as having been of more extended duration. And that such extension is absolutely necessary, I hope yet to be enabled more fully to show.

Another important circumstance, which gives much strength to the idea of this being a chronological narrative of events to the end of the age is, the exact accordance of the prediction, not only with the events in former times, but also with those of present occurrence. I have already noticed the harmony which subsists between Historical facts and the order of these facts as here recorded, in so far as relates to earlier times; and a little attention will show how remarkably the correspondence is still maintained. The last sign before "the end" comes, you observe, is the universal preaching of the gospel. This sign has not yet been fulfilled; but that which immediately precedes it, is now so evidently being accomplished as particularly to arrest attention. It is an awful sign, but fearfully applicable to the circumstances of the church and of the world: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Mat. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity shall abound." In all ages it might have been said this sign was more or less applicable; but *as a sign* it must refer to some time pre-eminently guilty, and never was it so fearfully realized as in the present day. Iniquity of every description abounds both at home and abroad, in such a manner as to mark this, with peculiar emphasis, as the epoch of the prediction. Iniquities which have borrowed all the aids of civilization and of science to add to their enormity, are daily perpetrated; and atrocities unheard of in any former age, or among the most barbarous of nations, have stamped their infamy on lands which proudly claim the sacred name of Christian. Who can cast his eye over the face of society, or attend for an hour to the daily records of its crime, without perceiving the appalling realization of this prediction? In the proud defiance of all that is sacred—in the blasphemies fearlessly uttered and industriously circulated—in the murders unprovoked, yet extensively committed for the paltry price which the human carcase can command—in all the varied forms in which impurity prevails, and the fiendish arts by which lust is gratified—in the daring and dexterous schemes by which fraud is extensively practised and concealed—in the thousand forms which sin assumes, refusing

to be shamed, there is the sad, sad evidence indeed, that we live in times in which, with peculiar propriety, it may be said, *Iniquity abounds*. To this view of the moral aspects of our times, I assuredly expect your assent, and therefore I feel warranted in pressing upon your attention that interpretation of our Lord's prediction with which they so strikingly correspond.

But "Because iniquity shall abound," said the Saviour, "*the love of many shall wax cold*," and again I calculate upon your acknowledgment of its obvious fulfilment in the state of the church. Perhaps at no former period has real religion been so deplorably low among professors of the name of Christ, as at the present day. A clearer comment is not furnished of the former clause in the aspects of the world, than is presented of the latter in the state of the church. With difficulty indeed can even the broad line of demarcation be drawn; and, worst of all, men "love to have it so." To keep "unspotted from the world" is now no regulating precept of the majority of those called by the sacred name of Christ. His holy institutions are perverted or despised, his choicest gifts are unsought and unprized, and, in frequent instances, the authority of his word holds an inferior place to the opinions and practices of men. The few redeeming qualities, if so they may be called, which lightened the darker shades of the sad picture, are fast passing away, and daily do they vanish with little expression of regret. The noblest of our institutions is much debased, and those by whom it is supported, and those by whom its management is conducted, have avowedly leagued themselves with those who are "denying the Lord who bought them."^{*} Fast indeed is the measure of iniquity being filled up, and a day of retribution is at hand. It has already commenced. The storm of divine indignation has

* It is scarcely necessary to remark that I here refer to the British and Foreign Bible Society. To all their guilt of adulterating the word of God, they have just added (May 7th,) that of a decision by which they formally admit into the management of this institution those who deny the divinity of the Saviour, and have refused to acknowledge God in their meetings, or seek His direction. If "Ichabod" was inscribed upon its front by former unacknowledged guilt, the characters are now retraced and more deeply impressed by these recent transactions.

burst forth, and the nations are writhing in the agonies it has occasioned.

The Coming of the Lord is preceded by a period of awful tribulation, and it is "immediately after" that his Return takes place. I have already exhibited the ground on which I differ from you concerning the time of this unparalleled affliction,—having endeavoured to prove its reference to the close of the times of the Gentiles and the Restoration of Israel. This is the period fixed for it by the prophets, whose expressions admit of no modification. I have already referred to the testimony of Daniel. Precisely similar are the statements of Jeremiah. "*Alas! for that day is great, so that NONE IS LIKE IT; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.* For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and *strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.*" Jer. xxx. 7, 8. And as our Lord himself says, immediately after the tribulation of those days shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, so the prophet here adds, "*They shall serve the Lord their God, and THE BELOVED their King, whom I will raise up unto them.*"—"Then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, *nor ever* shall be. And except those days should be shortened, *there should no flesh be saved.* But [blessed be God for His promise,] for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." This prediction by our Lord, of a period when there should *no flesh* be saved but for the elect's sake, corresponds fully with another in Isaiah, which also refers to the period immediately preceding the time "*when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.*" Between the part of the prediction of our Lord concerning His return, under consideration, and that of the prophet, there is an exact parallel, while the prophet also foretells the awful tribulation by which it is preceded: "*Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty.... Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.*" Is. xxiv. 1—6, 23.

With a peculiarity of expression and unaccommodating precision, the evangelists thus speak of it as a time of trouble

" such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be;" (Mat. xxiv. 21.) and " in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, *no flesh* should be saved ; but, for the elect's sake whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." (Mark xiii. 19, 20.) All this you, however, applied to the destruction of Jerusalem. To the same period is it referred by Henry in his Commentary. Quoting the words, " there shall be great tribulation," he says, " great indeed, when within the city plague and famine raged, and (worse than either,) faction and division, so that every man's sword was against his fellow," thus endeavouring to prove its fulfilment in all the predicted magnitude. But he afterwards says, " the *tribulation of those days*, includes *not only* the destruction of Jerusalem, but all the other tribulation that *the church* must pass through." This is a principle of interpretation which, however accommodating and fitted to relieve from every difficulty, I can by no means adopt. " *Those days*" plainly refer to days already spoken of, and if Henry was right in his first application, to that he should have felt bound to adhere.

Some eminent expositors, however, among whom are Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Faber, consider the tribulation spoken of, to refer to no particular period, either at the destruction of Jerusalem or at the Restoration of Israel ; but that it includes all the various calamities in which the Jews were involved, and thus beginning with the first sufferings of the Jews, it " extends to the whole time of their captivity, even to the close of the times of the Gentiles." This explanation, if admissible, would avoid what with many forms a great difficulty. But as I regard " the tribulation of *those days*" to be used more definitely, I cannot avail myself of its aid.

That there is in Matthew's narrative some obscurity, from the abruptness with which our Lord is represented as referring to the period of tribulation, is what I have no wish to deny. But the circumstances most fitted to throw light upon it have been too little attended to. If it be kept in view that the gospel by Matthew was written expressly for the Jews, while that of Luke was written for Gentiles, it will tend to explain how it is that to us Luke's narrative appears most distinct.

The Jewish converts, from their acquaintance with the Old Testament prophets, were better qualified for understanding a simple allusion to the great tribulation at the period of their Restoration. When, therefore, Matthew intimates to them the time of Christ's coming as immediately after that greatest tribulation, they would readily recognise his allusion. But for the same reason it was necessary that Luke should be more explicit, since he wrote to those less minutely acquainted with prophecy.

Another circumstance to be attended to, in considering Matthew's reference to the great tribulation is, that he had already given them a chronological view of events up to the end of the age. In that narrative he had distinctly given the various signs by which it and the coming of the Lord should be preceded. And thus it is that in giving directions concerning their conduct, in relation both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the Lord, he is only drawing inferences from what he had previously declared.

But, as already noticed, the *extent* of the tribulation forms a check which renders it impossible to apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem. It is the greatest which ever was or shall be; and as the greatest that ever was till that same time is at the Restoration of Israel, it necessarily follows that the one to which the evangelist refers must still be future.

And "except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved." Scott on this passage very properly remarks, of the Jews who had embraced Christianity, that "it does not appear that the *continuance* of this tribulation," referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, "in the smallest degree tended to exterminate them; indeed," he adds, "it is not known that *any* Christians lost their lives by means of them." But he understands our Lord to refer only to the remnant of Jews "who should in *any age* of the world embrace Christianity." Still, however, I regard it as being the specification of a particular period, and that also of no very long duration, which seems implied in the Lord's *shortening* it.

Now this period is expressly called "the winter" and "the sabbath," whatever these may be. I have already remarked that the word translated "winter" may be rendered "outpouring," and have also assigned reasons for regarding it as an allusion to that awful *outpouring of the*

vials of the wrath of God upon his great Antichristian foes which takes place at the close of the times of the Gentiles, immediately before the Millennium. It may farther be noticed that the word "winter," which, in Matthew, occurs in connection with the Sabbath (the great Sabbatism of the day of the Lord, I think,) stands singly in Mark, and both call it the greatest tribulation that ever was or shall be. Now while these evangelists both place the Coming of the Son of Man "immediately after the tribulation of those days," it is remarkable as confirming the view already offered, that Luke, although he says nothing of "the winter," or *outpouring*, in that form of expression, gives the very view in other words. Among the last signs by which the Coming of the Son of man is preceded, he predicts "upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity." Now as this is the very idea which I attach to the great outpouring, his placing it before the Coming of the Son of man, and at the close of the times of the Gentiles, tends to confirm the general view already offered. Besides, if the words are to be understood as a reference to the seventh day, or to the natural season, connected with the miseries attendant on the flight from Jerusalem when besieged by the Romans, (and there is no historical fact on record which gives any countenance to that idea,) it is not a little remarkable that Luke should take no notice of them, since by his giving a minute account of these sufferings he might have been expected to be more particular on that point also.

Instead, therefore, of confining this greatest tribulation to the sufferings formerly inflicted on the Jews, I regard it as applying more peculiarly to the Gentiles; and instead of continuing during the whole term of Judah's long captivity, I believe it to be but for a little period, being shortened for the elect's sake; and instead of being at the destruction of Jerusalem, that it will be immediately followed by the coming of the Lord and the glorification of his saints. When in holy vision the beloved disciple " beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," he was informed that "these are they which

came out of THE great tribulation," (ΤΗΣ θλιψεως,) Rev. vii. 9, 10, 14. Not that they were those who had, in the course of ages, been subjected to *various* tribulations, from which they had successively been redeemed. They had not merely come out of "tribulation," which is all our translation intimates, but they came out of a particular and definite tribulation, which is expressively designated "*the* great tribulation." This tribulation I believe to be the same of which our Lord and the prophet Daniel speaks. That predicted by the prophet, is followed by the resurrection—that declared by our Lord, "immediately after" by His return, and sending his angels to gather together his elect—and out of that referred to by John, the elect are declared to have come.

This tribulation unparalleled in its extent, I believe we have already entered upon. It is the effect of the outpouring of the seventh vial; and the character of the times correspond in every respect with the predictions concerning it. And do not these present doings among the nations also correspond with such fearful declarations? Is not the Lord giving them blood to drink profusely, and sending among them a spirit of confusion and convulsion? Within a year* what changes have taken place on the Continent of Europe! An extensive region in Northern Africa, made a conquest by the arms of France—France herself also revolutionized, and Paris deluged with the blood of her citizens; their King being dethroned and banished—a revolt in Belgium, which, though thousands have fallen in the conflict, may yet lead to farther commotions—An insurrection in Italy, which, though suppressed by foreign arms, has left the stormy spirit still unquelled—A desolating war in Poland, in which the contending parties have acted as God's avenger on each other, still leaving little hope that the sought-for independance of the Poles is thus to be obtained—Commotions in Switzerland, and various changes among the minor states of Germany—In the East Indies a formidable war waged by one of the native Kings, and in our West India Islands, a revolt among the slaves, and the property of several of their oppressors consigned to the flames—An English fleet already in the Tagus, and one from France daily expected, to demand reparation for injuries and insult, or to

* The rapidity of change renders date necessary;—May 16th, 1831.

inflict chastisement on Portugal;—And in all this the hand of God is not seen, nor in all the changes which have been induced, is his authority at all recognized. With such characteristics of the times, can the Christian fail to perceive that he lives in “the great tribulation,” or be unaware of its dangers? But rapid as have been its movements, and sanguinary as has been its character, we have only witnessed its commencement, and ere the vial has been drained, there is reason to fear that some who now reject this interpretation, will be compelled to acknowledge it “the greatest tribulation that ever was or shall be,” and thus have forced upon them the conviction, that “immediately after” will be the celestial signs of his approach, when they shall “see the Son of man Coming in the Clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”

The language used by our Lord, as descriptive of His Coming, must at once recall to the recollection of those acquainted with the Old Testament prophets, the prediction by Daniel of the Coming of “one like the Son of man,” of whom it is also said, He “*came with THE CLOUDS of heaven.*” Dan. vii. 13. Now, the correspondence between the language used by the prophet, and that employed by our Lord, is so striking as not only to seem to refer to the same event, but to warrant the idea that our Lord, in foretelling the time of his Return in answer to the question of His disciples, makes a direct *quotation* from the prophet to lead their attention to him.* In another part of the prediction, the

* It must be regarded as one of the most singular perversions of which an eminent Critic could be capable, that Macknight, who, with you, applies our Lord’s prediction of his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, actually makes the same application of Daniel’s prophecy quoted above, of the coming of one like unto the Son of man with the clouds of heaven, at the destruction of the papal horn, when “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High,” of which prediction Macknight says our Lord’s is “an *explanation.*” After such an interpretation it will not, perhaps, appear surprising that he should ask, whether there can be any doubt that the apostles “by their Master’s *coming,* and by the *end of all things,* which they represent as at hand, meant his coming *to destroy Jerusalem,* and to put an end to the institutions of Moses?” Nor, however absurd his view, can he be charged with *inconsistency* when he asserts, that, “with the greatest propriety,” we may give a similar interpretation to “EVERY passage of their epistles in which the apostles have spoken of these things as at hand.”

Saviour not only refers to Daniel, but leaves a caution that we should "understand" him; and it is not unreasonable to suppose, that by the quotation concerning his coming he more particularly refers to the prediction of that prophet.

But similar as the prediction appears, you will not deny that Daniel here refers to the period when "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," after which Luke places the Coming of the Lord. It is at the destruction of the Papal horn immediately before the Millennium, which confirms the view that our Lord intimated His coming in the clouds of heaven to be, not at the destruction of Jerusalem, but as foretold by the prophet, at the overthrow of Antichrist.

However well Mr. Faber and you may agree with respect to *the nature* of our Lord's coming in the clouds of heaven, he differs from you entirely respecting *the time* of it. He fully admits, nay, lays it down as indisputable, that Dan. vii. 13, (already quoted,) 2 Thess. ii. 8, Dan. xii. 1, Joel iii. and Rev. xix. 11—21, all relate to the same period with Mat. xxiv. 30. To these passages he refers, as severally according with our Lord's own prediction of his coming again, although, as he states, they foretell "the coming of one like the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, to receive dominion, and glory, and royalty"—of "the standing up of the great prince Michael *for* the children of Judah"—of "the bright coming of the Lord foretold by St. Paul, in his prophecy of the Man of sin"—and of "the coming of the Word of God, foretold by St. John in the Apocalypse." *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. pp. 218, 219. vol. III. p. 494.

This, you are aware, is precisely the view which I entertain of the time of the Coming of the Lord. These all refer to the commencement of the Millennium, and not to the destruction of Jerusalem. The correctness of this application in reference to time may, I think, be established from many considerations besides the chronology already referred to, as embodied in the prediction itself, and confirmed as we have seen by its correspondence with Daniel's vision. Before arriving in the narrative to *the end of the age*, the Saviour has pointed out various circumstances as first to occur. Among these, and among the earliest of them, does he evidently refer, as already shown, to those events which brought destruction on Jerusalem, adding emphatically, and in the way of particular caution, "but the

end is not yet." In Luke it is, "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified; for these things must first come to pass; *but THE END is not by and by.*" Luke xxi. 9. The word rendered "by and by" would have been more perspicuously translated "immediately," as it is by Matthew in another part of the same prediction, when he places the coming of the Lord "*immediately after*" the great tribulation. Mat. xxiv. 29. "The *end* is not immediately;" and the Saviour afterwards pointed out many important circumstances which had first to occur.

Now, it is remarkable that such various *notes of order* did not arrest your attention, when imagining the time of *the end* to be that of the destruction of the Jewish polity. Important as that event was to the Jews, the time of "*the end*" is one of much more general interest to the world, whether viewed as a calamity to those involved, or contemplated as a blessing to the world thereafter. As formerly noticed, we are furnished by the prophet Daniel with the chronology both of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the time of the end. From his prediction we are clearly taught the distinction between them; for while the destruction of "*the city and the Sanctuary*" are plainly mentioned, that destruction is expressly placed *anterior* to the end. Their desolation, indeed, instead of beginning only, really ceases then; for they continue desolate "*until the Consummation.*" This term "*consummation*" here clearly refers to some great chronological epoch, as the termination of their desolation. It is emphatically denominated "*THE end,*" or consummation. It is not *an end* merely, nor the end of *some one event* previously referred to, but is one of such note and magnitude as could not fail to be recognized as "*the*" end,—it is in fact the end of the age.

But the passage of the prophet contains another chronological mark by which the period of the end may be ascertained. It is when "*that determined shall be poured upon the desolate;*" or, as corrected in the margin, "*upon the desolator.*" Now, so far from this having been effected at the destruction of Jerusalem, *that* very event proved the power, and formed one of *the triumphs* of the desolator, which was no other than the Roman empire. This empire still stands, and though now in the divided form of the European kingdoms, (as predicted, Dan. ii. 44.) continued undivided, and in its gigantic might, long after the destruction

of Jerusalem. It is not till at the very commencement of the Millennium that "that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolator." It is at the very time, as we have already seen, when the prophet beheld, and "one like unto the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven" at the destruction of the fourth great beast. Dan. vii. 13. Accordingly, concerning the Papal horn the prophet says, "the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, *to consume and to destroy it UNTO THE END.* And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." ver. 26, 27. And in the Apocalypse this period is marked as the end of time. At the sounding of the *seventh angel* it is proclaimed, that "time should be no longer." Rev. x. 7. This then is "the end of the age." A new era shall now arise upon the world; for when the same *seventh angel* has sounded, then shall "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ." Rev. xi. 15.

As then "the City and the Sanctuary" are to be made desolate, only *until* "the consummation," that consummation cannot yet have arrived, (although you referred to the passage as if this end expressly applied to the destruction of Jerusalem merely,) for both Jerusalem and its Sanctuary still continue desolate; and if they are to continue desolate only *until* the consummation or end, the simple fact of their being still in that state proves that end to be still future. But so certainly as evidence is thus afforded that the end has not yet arrived, so surely will it be evidenced that it has arrived when the city and the Sanctuary are *rebuilt*, which, as predicted by the prophets, will be at the Restoration of Israel. Zech. xiv. 11. Ezek. xlvi. 1—3. xlviii. 8.

But there is more than the mere similarity of the language, descriptive of the Son of Man, to mark the correspondence in point of time between Daniel's prophecy of that event, and the prediction of our Lord. I have already shown that the prophet refers to the commencement of the Millennium, and in the verse which immediately follows, it is added, "*And there was given him dominion, and glory, and A KINGDOM, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him.*" In like manner, our Lord having described his coming with power and great glory, adds, "*When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD *is nigh at hand.*" Now between these two statements there is a very obvious and remarkable harmony, which would at least *appear* to intimate a correspondence in point of time, and which would lead us to regard both as still future. But although you have sometimes referred to the passage in the prediction of the Saviour as to an unfulfilled promise, yet in your exposition of the prophecy it was applied to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, and as referring to the merely spiritual Kingdom. Among the numerous checks which the prediction contains, however, I regard this as one of the most difficult to accommodate upon your system of interpretation. You suppose this to be the merely Spiritual kingdom. And at the destruction of Jerusalem, was the Spiritual kingdom really only "*nigh at hand*"? Was it not established by our Lord during his personal ministry on the earth? Before this he had said to the Pharisees who came inquiring about the external kingdom, "the kingdom of God is within you" or among you, and others he had taught it was come unto them. Yet, if your view be correct concerning the coming of the Lord and the Kingdom spoken of, it could not have been established till after the destruction of Jerusalem, for at the coming of the Son of man it is only "*nigh at hand*." What! was it not even established, when at the day of Pentecost the Spirit was given in miraculous manifestations to the disciples? This display of Christ's power, bestowed upon him by the Father, and exercised through the Spirit, I certainly regard as belonging to the period of the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, and that it had then done more than *drawn nigh*, that it had now, at least, fully come unto them. Still you say, no; for as the coming of the Son of man was at the destruction of Jerusalem, and as, when this event occurred, the Kingdom of God is only "*nigh at hand*," it could not have been established till long after the wonders of Pentecost.

Farther, if the Coming of the Son of man was at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Kingdom of God was then only nigh at hand, and if this was indeed the Spiritual Kingdom, then, necessarily, was that spiritual kingdom not established by the apostles themselves. Then all their labours, mental and bodily, were performed—all the gifts with which they were endowed were exercised—all their

churches were planted and watered—all their epistles were written, and read, and in circulation—and, with the exception of John, all of them consigned to the tomb—all before the erection of the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ!! And if so, I may surely be allowed to ask at what time, and by whom was it afterwards erected? If the twelve disciples, with one exception, had finished their labour on earth before the destruction of Jerusalem, and if, as you affirm, the spiritual kingdom was at that destruction only "*nigh at hand*," by whom was it afterwards erected, and what demonstration was subsequently given of the fact, which had not previously been made? The plain answer to this question is that the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, instead of being only *nigh at hand* at the destruction of Jerusalem, was erected long before, and that therefore the interpretation which fixes the coming of the Son of man, to have been at the destruction of Jerusalem, since it involves such consequences, must be erroneous.

From these various circumstances I think it evident that "*the kingdom of God*," referred to by our Lord, is no other than the Millennial Kingdom predicted by Daniel, and that, as it is only "*nigh at hand*," when the Son of Man is seen coming in the clouds of heaven, that this is also the same coming, witnessed by the prophet, which he similarly describes; and as this coming immediately precedes the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, that this is the period to which our Lord refers. And thus is confirmed the view already given from His prediction that the coming of the Son of man, is subsequent to the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles, and at the Restoration of Israel.

This view is also farther strengthened by another of our Lord's statements, which yet remains to be noticed. After having predicted his coming, he immediately adds, "*And when these things begin to come to pass, THEN look up and lift up your heads, for your REDEMPTION draweth nigh.*" Luke xxi. 28. Of whom does our Lord thus speak, and to what does he refer? Is this redemption any thing that took place at or after the destruction of Jerusalem, either as regarded Jews or Gentiles, believers or unbelievers? I think not. To no class was that event a "*redemption*" of any kind, nor has it ever yet been followed by any thing which could be so regarded, without manifest impropriety. Appli-

ed to that period, it cannot be referred to the Jews as a nation, for they afterwards suffered more than before, and subsequently Jerusalem came to be trodden down of the Gentiles, and continues so until this day. Neither can it be applied to believing Jews, in reference to that period. The destruction of Jerusalem itself brought them no "redemption." They suffered in it the loss of their property, and instead of its being followed by, or bringing nigh, a redemption for them, it was succeeded by severe and unrelenting persecutions. How many Jewish Christians were afterwards subjected to the power of heathen hatred for their adherence to the cause of the crucified Nazarene ! All the apostles are supposed to have been martyred for his name, with the exception of John, who was punished with banishment to Patmos, after having escaped unhurt from the boiling oil. If it refers to Jews particularly, it must be to *believing* Jews ; yet to them it will in no way apply, if the destruction of Jerusalem is to be considered as the Coming of the Son of man. In the prospect of that "redemption," those addressed are called to look up and lift up their heads, since, by those events, the promised redemption would be brought nigh. But oh, with what other feelings than those of rejoicing, did believing Jews regard that destruction ! When predicted by the Saviour, what solicitude did his disciples display for its preservation ! And are we to forget the repeated cautions of our Lord, that instead of their redemption being brought nigh by that event, that it was only "the beginning of sorrows," even to them ?

To a different period than the destruction of Jerusalem therefore must this "redemption" refer ; and you yourself have since quoted the words, applying them to the glory which awaits believers at our Lord's return. This I regard as the proper application, although, by some who have given considerable attention to the subject, it has been applied to the Restoration of Israel. The contrast between their dispersed, oppressed, and captive state might be well expressed by their "redemption." But the expression "your redemption draweth nigh," is put, apparently, in Luke's gospel, in place of *the gathering of the elect*, in the other two. For where in Matthew and Mark this is mentioned, there is nothing about the "redemption;" so, in Luke, who intimates the redemption as drawing nigh when these things

begin to come to pass, there is nothing about the angels being sent to gather together the elect from the four winds.

The promised redemption at the Coming of the Son of man, is therefore utterly irreconcileable with your idea of that Coming having been at the destruction of Jerusalem. And on the grounds mentioned, the interpretation by which it is applied to the glorification of the Saints at their Lord's return appears preferable. This, Paul expressly calls "the adoption, *the redemption* of our bodies," for which he says the whole creation waits. Rom. viii. 22.

Desiring the participation of its blessings, may we seek a juster appreciation of its glory, and hail with joy every event which more clearly indicates that our redemption indeed draweth nigh. This is an exercise in which every Christian should be engaged, and which is especially incumbent on those whose attention is particularly called to the contemplation of passing events. That you may thus be enabled "to discern the signs of the times," is the unfeigned prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Yours in Christian love, &c.

LETTER VI.

ON THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF PROPHECY, AND THE IDEA OF A DOUBLE REFERENCE IN THE PRE- DICTION.

REVEREND SIR,

In previous Letters, I trust I have established the impossibility of understanding our Lord to affirm that his Coming would take place at the destruction of Jerusalem, and have proved that event to be at the Restoration of Israel. It yet remains, however, that I now examine the *nature* of that Coming. This is necessary, not merely for farther demonstrating that your interpretation of our Lord's prediction is erroneous, but also for its vindication from the views of some who place that coming correctly enough at the close of the Times of the Gentiles.

You not only referred our Lord's prediction of his coming in the clouds of heaven to an improper time; but having

done so, you necessarily maintained that it was not the prediction of a personal, but of a *figurative* coming. In this last idea you have Mr. Faber's support, who, although he rejects as a "vulgar error" the opinion of its being a figurative coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, yet regards it as a figurative coming at the Restoration of Israel. You both appeal to the language of ancient prophecy as a warrant for such an interpretation--although even in this you differ widely in your views and application of the different passages from which it is inferred. Our Lord's prediction Mr. Faber applies absolutely to the destruction of Christ's enemies before the Millennium, although he considers the language *borrowed* from that of the personal Return of Christ; on the other hand, while you applied it directly to the destruction of Jerusalem, and as then completely fulfilled, you also considered it as referring in some way to the personal return of Christ, to which you said the prediction has a leaning and a looking forward.

This last mentioned idea I shall consider fully; but proceed in the first place to examine the argument urged by both from the figurative language of ancient prophecy. "The literal future judgment," says Mr. Faber, "both of the quick and of the dead, and the literal Second Advent of Christ *with the clouds of heaven*, are poetically, though appropriately, used as a type, or symbol, or hieroglyphic of *any* eminent judgment, inflicted here below, upon *any* impious nation or community, through the instrumentality of those secondary causes which God may be pleased to call into effective action."

"Of this remarkable phraseology," he continues, "instances occur perpetually in the mystic volume of Prophecy. And respecting its true import we cannot doubt; because the requisite explanation has been afforded by the occurrence of the predicted event itself." *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 227.

Now, with those who deny the premillennial Return of the Redeemer, this is a most important point; and one which, if at all open to dispute, will necessarily affect materially the arguments on which their cause principally rests. When, therefore so much depends upon its truth, it would require to be clearly exhibited and well defended. But although frequently asserted by you, and laid down by Mr. Faber with the utmost confidence, as a proposition which

“we cannot doubt,” I must be allowed not merely to express dubiety, but also to take the liberty of expressly controverting it, and of calling for the proof. So far from ceding the point thus assumed, some of the passages cited in its support, I claim as clear and distinct intimations of the future but premillennial coming of Christ.

Yet, as if wholly incontrovertible, you both simply refer to the passages as all fulfilled in former ages, and appeal to the nature of their fulfilment, as fitted to illustrate other predictions relating to future times, “because the requisite explanation has been afforded by the occurrence of the predicted event.”

“Thus,” Mr. Faber continues with unfaltering confidence, “if Babylon is to be destroyed by the instrumentality of the Medes and Persians: the great day of the Lord is said to come, the sun and the moon and the stars are darkened, the heavens are shaken, and the earth is removed out of its place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. Thus if Egypt is to be judicially visited: Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. Thus if Assyria is to be punished: Behold the Name of the Lord cometh from afar, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy; he causeth his glorious Voice to be heard, and sheweth the lightning down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire and with scattering and tempest and hailstones; through the Voice of the Lord, the Assyrian is beaten down; Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the King it is prepared; he has made it deep and large; the pile thereof is much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.”

“In all this, and in numerous parallel cases,” Mr. Faber asserts, “the language is purely *figurative*. God’s temporal judgments upon the nations are abroad; and therefore of such *temporal* judgments, the *literal* future day of judgment, and the *literal* second advent of the Lord, are employed as the conventional fixed symbol or hieroglyphic. When Babylon, and Egypt, and Assyria were respectively visited; it is clear, that nothing *supernatural* occurred.”

Sac. Cal. vol. I. pp. 227, 228.

It is, therefore, on the assumption that the predictions quoted have *already* been fulfilled, that the burden of proof is supposed to rest, that our Lord himself, in predicting his coming with power and great glory, does *not* foretell his personal return. But it is sufficiently obvious, that although it were conceded, that these predictions had long ago been fulfilled, and although it were admitted that these refer to times when the nations specified “*were* respectively visited,” rather than to times yet future, and that “nothing supernatural occurred,” this would *not* prove that in no other prophecy of the coming of the Lord is a literal advent foretold. For it is not to be forgotten, that both you and Mr. Faber do expect the Lord Jesus to return personally *at some period*; and unless we be willing to rest in a vague unproveable *expectation* of this, it must be supposed to be somewhere foretold. In point of fact you both regard the personal return of the Redeemer to be a predicted truth; but if it is any where predicted, then must we examine in what particular prophecy it is revealed. The fact, that in some predictions concerning the coming of the Lord nothing more had been meant than temporal judgments, if of itself sufficient proof that one other prediction was of the same nature, would equally apply to others, and thus by being so adduced in reference to all predictions of Christ’s coming, would leave that glorious event absolutely unproveable. Yet, if, without examination of the circumstances which gave rise to any particular prophecy, and to the circumstances which that prophecy itself embraces, we should simply affirm, that since certain other predictions concerning the coming of the Lord were figurative, that this must therefore necessarily be so also, we should establish a principle by which it would manifestly be impossible to prove that there was a single prediction of his ever returning otherwise. If, then, the personal coming of Christ be matter of revelation, the circumstance of certain figurative coming having previously been predicted, if that were the case, would not determine that every other is of the same nature; and the inquiry will still remain whether by that revelation the personal return is before or after the Millennium.

Now, this is a point which neither you nor Mr. Faber have attempted to decide, by direct reference to express

prediction. You make not an effort to prove, from the Word of God, that a coming of the Lord, even of any kind, is expressly foretold, as to be *subsequent* to the Millennium. Having found certain predictions of the coming of the Lord, which *you conceive* to refer to a figurative coming, these are appealed to as proof that when our Lord himself foretells his coming in the clouds of heaven, he meant a figurative coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, you suppose; while Mr. Faber, regarding that coming as future, attributes to it the same figurative character at the close of the times of the Gentiles. Surely before such a conclusion be drawn—a conclusion which would render proof of the personal return of the Saviour impossible—more regard should be given to the circumstances which occasion the prophecy, to the nature of the events foretold, to the language and the views of those addressed, to the characters they bear, and the work for which they were selected—circumstances, all of which conspire to prove that it is his real personal return of which our Lord so speaks.

But let me now examine for a little the nature of your evidence for the supposed figurative advent in temporal judgments on the nations. Often did you assume, and Mr. Faber, in the pages already quoted, expressly asserts, that of the true import of the phraseology employed in the predictions referred to, we cannot doubt, “because the requisite explanation has been afforded by the occurrence of the predicted event itself.” Without seeking for the unquoted “numerous parallel passages,” of which Mr. Faber speaks, let me then request your attention for a little to the consideration of those cited, taking it for granted, that if they are not in his own estimation most in point, that they are at least equally strong with any he has omitted. The examination may perhaps prove, that they do not bear out his assertion, and that they at least do not entitle any one to assume even the possibility of any predicted coming, meaning merely a figurative advent at any time whatever.

The following are the passages adduced by Mr. Faber, although the citations are not given by him: Is. xiii. 1—13. Is. xix. 1. Is. xxx. 27—33. Of these three, the one concerning the coming of the Lord upon a swift cloud to Egypt, is the most direct,—indeed it is, in some important respects, perhaps the most precise of any contained in the

Scripture. When thus adduced by Mr. Faber as a prophecy of which, without doubt, “the requisite explanation has been afforded by the occurrence of the predicted event itself,” it is, however, of no small importance in the argument, to know that however we may differ with respect to the *meaning* of the prophecy, you do not regard it as having hitherto received its accomplishment. For if it really be an unfulfilled prediction, certainly no one is at liberty to assume that the coming of the Lord which it foretells, will not be personal, and *then* to turn round and say, *since* this does *not* refer to a personal coming, *so* will that predicted by the Saviour himself be only *figurative*. The first point, therefore, to be ascertained, is the period to which the prophecy relates, and then to inquire into the nature of the coming it foretells. I cannot quote at length, but it is much to be wished that it were carefully examined in its connection; for I am persuaded that investigation will prove, not only that the whole chapter remains unaccomplished, but that a more extended context is so also.

“The burden of Egypt. *Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt;* and the idols of Egypt shall be moved *at his presence,* and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.” Is. xix. 1. The prophet proceeds to describe minutely a scene of awful confusion and perplexity, of civil war and foreign invasion, to which they shall be subjected; next predicts some providential dispensation, and also human interference, by which “the waters shall fail from the sea, and the rivers shall be wasted and dried up. And *they shall turn the rivers far away,* and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up; the reeds and flags shall wither.” ver. 2—6. Another consequence of this drought and change in the channel of the Nile, is described as the lamentation of the fishermen; and also “they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net works, shall be confounded. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.... Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush may do.” ver. 7—15.

In all this, it will readily be conceded, there is nothing which *may not* refer to the future; and although in the whole prophetic description, there is the most obvious and

pointed allusion to the peculiarities of Egyptian circumstances, I am not aware that any attempt has ever been made to exhibit its real accomplishment. All attempts of this kind must indeed prove abortive, by its inseparable connection with what immediately follows, which it is my happiness to know you regard as referring to the commencement of the Millennium. Its importance will warrant more lengthened quotation. "*In that day* shall Egypt be like unto women; and it shall be afraid and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shaketh over it. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt: every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself; because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts which he hath determined against it. *In that day* shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, *and swear to the Lord of hosts*; one shall be called the city of Destruction, [or of Heres, or of the Sun. *marg.*] *In that day* shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts, in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppressors; and *He shall SEND THEM A SAVIOUR, and a Great One*, and He shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt; and *the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day*; and shall do sacrifice and oblation; *yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it*. And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it: and *they shall return even unto the Lord*; and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. *In that day* shall there be an highway out of Egypt to Assyria; and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. *In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land*, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be *Egypt my people*, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." ver. 16—25.

Any farther remark to prove this to be an unfulfilled prediction, and one which clearly relates to the commencement of the Millennium, is quite unnecessary, and we are only left to wonder where Mr. Faber has ever yet found

"the occurrence" of all or any of these predicted events, which thus stand connected with the Coming of the Lord.

Such then is the connection of this prediction, that "the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt," disproving completely Mr. Faber's opinion of the time stated, even as sanctioned by your own former expositions. But it is of too much consequence not to avail myself of a direct argument from it in support of the view already presented of the Saviour's prediction of His Return "in a cloud," as narrated by Luke. The prophet and evangelist place His Coming at the same time; both intimate it as to be in the same manner; and if there be any proof that Luke refers to a personal coming, this seems not less explicitly declared by Isaiah. In quoting the words of the prophet, you said such a view would involve an absurdity. Instead of retorting the charge on your view of a *figurative* coming, let me simply ask, which is most accordant with the statements given? That the Saviour will come from heaven *to the earth* at some period, is evident from the assurance of Joh, that "he shall stand at the latter day *upon the earth*." But if he ever comes to earth, it must be *to some place*; and as there is not in the whole Scriptures a single intimation of his coming direct to any other place, where is the absurdity in believing that he will come to Egypt; the manner of his coming here declared, being the only one also in which His Return is predicted?

Again, when "the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt," it is in answer to the prayer of the Egyptians. "They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and He *shall send* them a Saviour, and a Great One." How is such language consistent with any idea which denies his personal presence? It is not God the Father, for the cry of the oppressed is addressed to Him; and He cometh not himself, but "shall *send* them a Saviour." Equally inconsistent is this language to Christ, except as possessed of human nature. In his divine nature He is already everywhere present, and needs not to be *sent*, and having assumed our nature, in it alone can He be *sent*. Even before His incarnation, the Son was often sent to our world on missions of mercy; on these occasions he appeared in human form, though not possessed of human nature. But having become incarnate, after His resurrection He

left this world *in a cloud*, and so shall He come in like manner; and as it is here expressly promised that he shall so come to Egypt, and as the Scriptures speak not of his so coming to any where else, I trust you will yet see reason to acknowledge that the charge of absurdity was made unadvisedly, as you already reject Mr. Faber's interpretation of the past fulfilment of the prediction.

Another of the passages cited by Mr. Faber as proof of his view of the figurative language of prophecy was also quoted by you for the same purpose. Although less evidently a prediction concerning the future, I believe it to be not less really so. “Howl ye,” says the same prophet, “for the day of the Lord is at hand: it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed, one at another; their faces shall be as flames. *Behold the day of the Lord cometh*, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy *the sinners* thereof out of it. For *the stars* of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; *the sun* shall be *darkened* in his going forth, and *the moon* shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish *the world* for their evil, and *the wicked* for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make *a man* more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” Is. xiii. 6—12.

That in this passage the prophet refers to the same period of which our Lord in his prediction speaks, I have no doubt, and I know no reason to question that the celestial signs are to be interpreted in the same way. But at present it is less my object to examine into the nature of these signs, than to ascertain *the time* to which this prophecy relates. It is one of the three on which Mr. Faber rests his proof of the statements contained in our Lord’s prediction, being merely the figurative language of prophecy, which, he asserts, is so common in Old Testament prediction. Let us therefore attend a little to the circumstances foretold.

The prophet clearly refers to a time of great destruction and calamity to men—not of a limited, but of a general

nature : "therefore shall *all hands* be faint, and *every man's heart* shall melt;" God "will punish *the world* for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity;" and so extensive will be these overwhelming judgments, that a man will be "more precious than fine gold."

But it is upon *the title*, I have no doubt, that Mr. Faber grounds his opinion of the prediction being already fulfilled : "The burden of *Babylon*, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." ver 1. But in the Apocalypse, John also saw the burden of *Babylon*, of the same mystic Babylon, I apprehend, that is here referred to.* Its overthrow under the outpouring of the 7th vial, is in a period of tribulation such as is here described. This day of wrath Isaiah repeatedly calls "the day of the Lord," and "the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle;" ver. 4, 6, 9. And in the Apocalyptic vision, John saw the nations muster against Messiah ; "these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them ; for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings." Rev. xvii. 14.

But instead of pointing farther to circumstances of minute coincidence, it is sufficient to overthrow Mr. Faber's view of the prophecy having been already accomplished, to notice how clearly it is limited to Israel's future and final restoration. The 13th and 14th chapters are unquestionably connected, the latter being merely a continuation of the former. It begins with the reason of this Babylon's overthrow, "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." Is xiv. 1. It is not merely their return to their land, but their restoration to power which they have never yet possessed since this prediction was uttered. Not only shall their captivity cease, but they shall then have *the ascendancy* over the Gentiles ; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for *servants* and for *handmaids* ; and *they shall take them captives whose captives they were* ; and *they shall rule over their oppressors.*" ver. 2. Before either you or Mr. Faber draw inferences concerning the nature of the celestial appearances described by the prophet,

* In my "Connected View of the Scriptural Evidence of the Redeemer's Speedy Personal Return," (p. 259, 4th edition,) I have exhibited evidence in proof of the identity of the Babylon denounced by John, and that described in the above and in other Old Testament predictions.

it will yet be necessary to show that the prophecy has really received its accomplishment, and that not in some particulars only, but in all—for that in many things, the fate of the real and of the mystic Babylon will be the same, is obviously intimated. In the circumstances already referred to, as well as in others which might be specified, the prophecy is inapplicable to the overthrow of *ancient* Babylon. This is, therefore, the destruction which awaits the great enemy of Israel when he comes against them after their restoration : “ The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass ; and as I have purposed so shall it stand ; that I will break the Assyrian *in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot*; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed *upon the whole earth* ; and, this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it ? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ? ” ver. 24—17. Let nothing more be said then of “ the occurrence of the predicted event,” as if it were past, until a fulfilment be found corresponding with the prophecy in these its particulars, for it is not more obvious that nothing supernatural occurred in the events to which Mr. Faber would refer the prediction, than that all which he would call *natural* here foretold has never yet been accomplished.

The only remaining evidence cited by Mr. Faber in support of his view of the figurative language of prophecy, is one which I regard as strictly parallel to that last quoted. If the evidence be rather less direct in support of the view already exhibited, I still think it sufficient, while there is certainly nothing from which the opinion of its past accomplishment can be at all established : “ Behold the Name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy ; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire : and his breath as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity : and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept ; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty

One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff [the rod of correction, *Louth,*] shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the King it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it." Is. xxx. 27—33.

Such is the third passage cited by Mr. Faber, as not only fulfilled, but as so obviously accomplished, as to furnish a clear illustration that Christ's prediction of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, is merely the annunciation of temporal judgments. But certainly there is nothing in the above prophecy itself, from which it can be ascertained, that there has ever yet been any "occurrence of the predicted event." Where, I ask, is the evidence that the coming of the Name of the Lord from far, means merely the infliction of his wrath through human agency? The circumstances described do not, you must acknowledge, accord fully with those which have ever attended the overthrow of any Assyrian foe which Israel has yet encountered; and seems, like the former passage, to refer to the utter discomfiture of the great enemy with whom they have to contend after their future return to their own land. It is immediately connected with the Millennium in the context: "And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters *in the day of the great slaughter*, when the towers fall. Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, *in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people*, and healeth the stroke of their wound." ver. 25, 26. From this it appears that this day of dreadful slaughter is to be just at the time when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, &c. which is universally understood to refer to the Millennial era. This is further confirmed by its being also connected with the

conversion of Israel, God's chosen people, and their restoration to the favour of God, "when the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people." And, in the midst of all the evil by which their enemy shall be overtaken, a period of "rejoicing and gladness of heart" is promised them. Notwithstanding of the peculiarly awful nature of the means employed,—"*the flame of a devouring fire*, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones," (which means, also, prove the prophecy to be unaccomplished,) it shall be with tabrets and harps, employed in praise to the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, "The Mighty One of Israel."

From these various circumstances I conclude, that this passage, like the other two adduced by Mr. Faber, is an unfulfilled prediction, and that instead of presenting evidence in support of his views, that it farther exhibits the uniformity with which the Old Testament prophecies, as well as those of the New, concur in stating and enforcing the premillennial advent of the Redeemer.

Before closing this part of the inquiry, however, I must yet refer to the declaration of Peter on the day of Pentecost, including a quotation from the prophecies of Joel, which the more requires examination, that it has been supposed to exhibit strong figurative language and the idea of a double reference, by some who altogether reject such a view of our Lord's prediction.

The wonder which was excited by the first communication of spiritual gifts, when the disciples "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance," was extreme. "The multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." It was unaccountable, and "they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? *Others mocking*, said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words; For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, *I will pour out of my*

Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” Acts ii. 13—20.

This quotation you applied partly to the manifestations of the Spirit in those miraculous gifts bestowed upon the church; and partly to the destruction of Jerusalem, which afterwards took place. You thence argued that the sun’s being darkened, and the moon’s being turned into blood, was figurative; and that being parallel to our Lord’s prediction, the passage confirmed your application of it. There are, however, several things to be noticed, which you wholly overlooked on that occasion. First, there is no necessary connection between the view taken of the first part of the quotation as being a direct prediction of the bestowal of miraculous gifts, and the idea that the latter part is a figurative prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. It certainly might be an intimation of the signs which shall precede the personal coming of the Lord,—which I believe it to be. Not only is this view confirmed, but yours is directly opposed, by the express statement that these things are to take place “*before* that great and notable day of the Lord come.” If the destruction of Jerusalem be the day of the Lord, then the darkening of the sun, or the blood-coloured appearance of the moon, cannot be a figurative expression of the same thing; for these celestial phenomena are represented as taking place “*before*” that day. Besides, if the great tribulation spoken of by our Lord, in his own prediction of His coming, be the destruction of Jerusalem, as you affirm it was, then the celestial signs foretold by the Saviour, instead of being “*before*” that day, were to be “*immediately after*” it.

But while thus meeting you on your own supposition, and showing its inconsistencies, I have farther to remark that I do not consider the language of the apostle as warranting the idea that he affirmed Joel’s prediction to have at that time received its accomplishment. An examination of the con-

text will show that Joel in the passage cited clearly refers to the period of Israel's Restoration, at the commencement of the Millennium: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. *For, behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*" Joel ii. 31, 32. iii. 1, 2. Clearly, therefore, does the prophet refer to events still future. Accordingly Mr. Faber regards the passage as an express prediction of the ultimate destruction of the great Antichristian confederation before the Millennium, saying, "Joel clearly predicts *those identical events* which St. John arranges under the Seventh Vial." *Sac. Cal.* vol. iii. p. 308. Nay, although, when illustrating our Lord's prediction of His coming, you yourself quoted Joel as fulfilled; yet on the very Sabbath following, in explaining the prophecy without having that idea in view, you admitted the connection between the 2d and 3d chapters of Joel, and stated the latter to be evidently yet unfulfilled. How then you could quote the words as an instance of highly figurative language, corresponding to your view of our Lord's prediction, was what I cannot explain.

But if the prediction refer to signs preceding the "day of the Lord," and of the general possession of miraculous gifts during His Millennial Reign, when the Spirit shall be poured "upon *all* flesh," the apostle's quotation of the passage yet remains to be explained. In doing so, the first thing to be attended to, is Peter's *obvious design* at the time. That design, then, was the correction of those who mockingly said the wonders they witnessed *were the effects of intoxication*. No question had been raised concerning the prophecy of Joel, or the period to which it applied; and although the apostle affirms that the Christians were now influenced by the *same Spirit* of whom Joel had prophesied, he does *not* say that *the prophecy itself was ful-*

filled. The context shows, that it was not then accomplished ; and your own admission you will accept as evidence, that such a statement could not be reconciled with truth. The apostle meets the mockers on the only ground which as objectors they had chosen to occupy, denying and disproving the charge preferred against his brethren. "These men," said they, "*are full of new wine.*" (ver. 13.) Peter's object is therefore to vindicate them from the malicious aspersion. From the early hour, he first reminds them of the high improbability of their being already intoxicated, and next asserts that it is the result of a power with which they ought not to have been ignorant : "These *are not drunken* as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day ; but *this is that* which was spoken by the prophet Joel." The question is thus made to turn on *the nature* of those influences by which they were moved, and not on *the time* of which Joel had spoken. No inquiry had been made or argument advanced concerning the period at which this or any other prophecy should be fulfilled. The people of various nations were amazed to hear unlearned Galileans speak a variety of languages, so that each was addressed in his own tongue. (ver. 7.) They were not only amazed, but they "*were in doubt*" as to the origin of so wonderful a power, and said one to another, "*what meaneth this?*" (ver. 12.) This then is the ground of the apostle's statement, and attention to it will obviate all the difficulty about the quotation made. This object was not to settle any dispute, or correct any mistake about the time of which the prophet spake, but to remove the doubts of those of the amazed auditors, and to vindicate from calumny the character of those whom God had honoured. He exculpates them from the injurious charge of being "*full of new wine,*" and declares the nature of that inspiration of which they were thus made the subjects, witnessing to these being produced by the outpouring of the Spirit. That which they affirmed to be the effects of intoxication, was the result of those influences of the Holy Spirit which Joel predicts shall yet be poured upon all flesh, and which Christ, being now "*exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,*" had shed forth upon his church that which they now saw and heard. (ver. 33.) The nature of the celestial signs stated by Joel as to occur "*before*

the great and the terrible day of the Lord come," therefore remains wholly undetermined by the apostle's quotation, and in no way proves that the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven is any thing less than his Personal Return.

Having thus shown how little countenance such passages give to the idea of mere temporal judgments on the Jews, or any other nation, being considered *a Coming* of the Lord, it may not be without advantage now to examine some of the Old Testament prophecies which *do* relate to the destruction of Jerusalem. A minute examination would, in all probability, prove a profitable exercise for those who embrace your view of the Coming of the Son of man. For, if you apply our Lord's prediction of his Coming with the clouds of heaven to that event on the express ground of such statements being merely the figurative language of Old Testament predictions, it would be well to ascertain the evidence that *SUCH figurative language* is really employed. Nay, if it be so common as the nature of your remarks would intimate, we may expect to find it employed frequently in those Old Testament predictions which foretell that event. In order, therefore, more completely to show how far this is from being the case, I quote a few predictions relative unto it. Be it remembered also, that notwithstanding of the frequency with which language of a really figurative nature is used in ancient prophecy, and that sometimes in predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, under the conquering power both of Babylon and Rome, neither you nor Mr. Faber have produced one single instance in which that event is called the Coming of the Lord, or in which terms any thing like these are so employed.

The first prediction of the evils with which God's ancient people should be visited, was given by Moses, which, although delivered before the children of Israel had any city of their own, describes with minuteness the siege of their future capital and its consequences. It is not, however, called "the Coming of the Lord" by the prophet, "The Lord shall bring *a nation*," "*a nation* whose tongue thou shalt not understand," "*a nation* of fierce countenance," and their "*enemies*," is the language employed. Deut. xxviii. 49, 50, 53. Precisely similar is that used by Jeremiah, "Lo, I will bring *a nation* upon you from far,

O house of Israel, saith the Lord : it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say." Jer. v. 15. Again, by the same prophet, " Thus saith the Lord concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land ; they shall die of grievous deaths ; they shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried ; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth : and they shall be consumed *by the sword*, and *by famine* ; and their carcases shall be meat for the fowls of heaven and for the beasts of the earth.... I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers ; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night, where I will not show you favour." Jer. xvi. 3, 4, 13. " And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing ; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss, because of all *the plagues* thereof. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters ; and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friends in the siege, and straitness wherewith *their enemies*, and *they that seek their lives* shall straiten them." Jer. xix. 8, 9. Still in all this statement of misery, there is not any intimation of its being the coming of the Lord, although inflicted by God on account of their guilt, who expressly says, " Behold I will bring *evil* upon this place, the which whosoever heareth his ears shall tingle." ver. 3.

In the prediction already referred to, by Daniel, of the destruction of the city and Sanctuary, the language is most explicit : " And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself ; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary." Dan. ix. 26. Here there is no confusion, no confounding of the Messiah with the people of the prince by whom Jerusalem was overthrown. Their enemies are repeatedly mentioned in the following prediction also, while there is not the most remote allusion to the Coming of the Lord, as synonymous : " I will even give them into the hand of *their enemies*, and into the hand of them that seek their life ; and their dead bodies shall be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. And Zedekiah

king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of *their enemies*, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you. Behold I will command, saith the Lord, and cause *them* to return to this city, and *they* shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire ; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant." Jer. xxxiv. 20—22.

Such are a few of the most explicit predictions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the sufferings of her people; and it is unnecessary to add, they afford no evidence whatever of the coming of the Lord being commonly used in Old Testament prophecy, to intimate the temporal judgments in which they were involved. But although some of the passages just cited are among the strongest of the predictions which foretold their overthrow, there are others of a *more figurative* nature. But still the figures used have not the most distant resemblance to the language descriptive of the Saviour's Return. Thus the Lord addressing Israel, by the prophet Ezekiel, says, "Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, *they are the flesh*, and this city *is the caldron*; but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it. Ye have feared the sword, and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord God. And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and I will execute judgments upon you." Ezek. xi. 6—9. Again, by the same prophet, "Thus saith the Lord God, Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it. Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God, Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it, bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it. For her blood is in the midst of her." Ezek. xxiv. 3—7. This figure is carried out at considerable length in the following verses, and others are used in different predictions; but, in so far as considerable examina-

tion warrants me to say, there is nothing in all the figurative language of Old Testament prophecies, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, which gives the slightest countenance to the idea of that event being called or considered the coming of the Lord.

It is not less remarkable, in opposition to your view of the figurative nature of our Lord's prediction, and in perfect harmony with that maintained above, that when the Saviour really foretold the destruction of Jerusalem in other cases, he did so in terms which could not be mistaken, whether it were delivered in the form of a parable, or in the pathetic language of prophetic expostulation. This is well exemplified in his parable of the marriage of the king's son, and in his address, when for the last time approaching to Jerusalem. Those first bidden to the wedding, slighted the gracious invitation, "but when the King heard thereof, he was wroth; and *he sent forth his armies* and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city." Mat. xxii. 7. There is no intimation here, (where it would be reasonable most to expect it, if your idea were correct,) of the *coming of the Son of man* for this purpose. "And when He was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now are they hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that *thine enemies* shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and *they* shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41—44. Instead of saying *He* should come for this work of destruction, the Saviour informs the Jews that their "*enemies*" should do so, with whom he does not identify himself.

These various passages are a fair specimen of Scriptural prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and I am at no small loss to discover the evidence on which you and Mr. Faber conclude, that "of such temporal judgments the literal future day of judgment, and the literal Second Advent of the Lord, are employed as the conventional fixed symbol or hieroglyphic." It is not the destruction of Jerusalem assuredly, which is so symbolized in Old Testament prophecy. Numerous as are its predictions of the

coming of the Lord, they are, in almost every instance, clearly referable to the period immediately preceding the Millennium; and therefore, instead of supporting in the least the notion of our Lord's coming in the clouds of heaven, being either figurative or past, they contribute valuable evidence in proof of the accuracy of that interpretation, which regards it as the Saviour's personal Return for the establishment of his promised Millennial Kingdom.

But conveniently as the Literal Second Advent is understood by you as a conventional fixed symbol in our Lord's prophecy, it is also made to serve another important purpose in the interpretation. Besides your application of it to the Destruction of Jerusalem, and Mr. Faber's application of it to the overthrow of Antichristian powers before the Millennium, you both regard it as having somehow another reference to the Personal Return of the Redeemer. While you frequently asserted *the entire fulfilment* of the prophecy during the existence of some of those alive when it was delivered, you still intimated, on several occasions, a conviction of its having *a leaning* and *a looking to* an event which you regard as near 3000 years after; Mr. Faber, while he treats your *primary* application as "a vulgar error," and generally refers the prediction of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven to the time immediately preceding the Millennium, finding circumstances in the prediction which he cannot reconcile to his own conviction to any thing but the Personal Advent, also departs from his own general interpretation. Exposing himself to all the charges of inconsistency brought against others, he says — "while the general context of our Lord's prediction requires us to suppose that the Coming of the Son of Man, thus preluded by infidelity, and anarchy, and licentiousness, is his figurative coming to destroy the Antichristian faction at the close of the seven times of the Gentiles; we have reason, I think, agreeably to the *double sense* of many prophecies, to believe that his *final coming* at the literal day of judgment, is also not obscurely alluded to. This opinion I am led to adopt, from a remarkable parenthetic clause inserted in the midst of the prophecy.

" But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but my Father only. Take ye heed: watch and pray; for ye

know not when the time is. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of man."

"The day and the hour," he remarks, "unknown to all save the Divinity himself, unknown even to the human soul of the Son, which (we are told, Luke ii. 52,) admitted of a *growth* in wisdom, can only be the literal day of judgment at the final consummation of all things." *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. pp. 258, 259.

Now, what is the amount of this statement? It is just this; that the very day which "the general context of our Lord's prediction *requires* us to suppose" will be before the Millennium, "*can only* be the literal day of judgment at the final consummation of all things!" It is of that very "day" which our Lord says is unknown, and for which he requires us to "watch and pray," that he had previously been speaking, and the signs of whose approach he has specified with so much minuteness: "*But of THAT DAY AND THAT HOUR knoweth no man.*" Of what day and hour? Of the very day and hour of the Coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven, which Mr. Faber strenuously maintains will be at the Restoration of Israel, and when he himself expects men to have sunk into all the security and all the wickedness of the antediluvians. These are Mr. Faber's own admissions; and it is not without singular inconsistency, that when convinced our Lord is really predicting His personal return, that instead of placing it where required by "the general context," he should arbitrarily depart from it to put that coming 1000 years beyond. This inconsistency is the more remarkable, since the character of the times, the nearer we approach the event, intimates the peculiar need of the Saviour's cautioning his disciples against the "surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life," and when the increasing infidelity shows too plainly how His Return will be "as a snare."

But Mr. Faber's reason for adopting the view of a "double sense" of the prophecy, and for supposing that a *third*

or “*final* coming at the literal day of judgment is also not obscurely alluded to,” is very far from being satisfactory. It is because he conceives “this character of absolute darkness and uncertainty *answers not* to the close of the latter three times and a half,” before the Millennium. But if this be the case, instead of talking of a “*double sense*” to evade the inapplicability of the prophecy, he ought to have felt bound to refer it entirely to that period to which alone he thought it could apply. If it really “*answers not*” to the former period, then it absolutely *is not* a prophecy of “*double sense*:” and if it will apply to that period, then Mr. Faber’s own reason for such an interpretation is destroyed; and it yet remains to be shown what necessity—what authority there is, for carrying away the Coming of the Son of man from the only time to which “the general context of our Lord’s prediction requires us to suppose” it was applied by its author.

In the interpretation of Scripture, there are few subjects on which more inconsistency has been displayed, than in upholding the idea of a double reference in our Lord’s prediction. Direct authority for such a view is never pretended,—all necessity for it is generally removed, as might at least be supposed, by those who affirm that the prediction was entirely fulfilled, in every particular, before some of those living contemporaneously with the Saviour had ceased to exist—and, from circumstances introduced in the prediction, such a scheme of interpretation necessarily involves the whole in inextricable confusion. Some Expositors apply to the close of this mundane system statements which others regard as totally inapplicable to any other period than the destruction of Jerusalem; and as both acknowledge the want of a standard for the regulation of their double sense, the fancy of each is made the only criterion. Henry indeed, expressly says that our Lord, from speaking of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds as the destruction of Jerusalem, afterwards speaks of it as His Second Coming at the end of time, which, he says, the Saviour “*insensibly* slides into a discourse of”—thus leaving it of course for the ingenuity of men to determine what is, *of itself*, undistinguishable.

Notwithstanding that you repeatedly asserted in the most express and positive terms that our Lord’s prediction of His

Coming was all fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem,—you on other occasions affirmed that it is an erroneous view to take of Scripture to refer only to one period this coming of Christ. Such an idea appears remarkable ; and, in reply, I must be allowed to say, that to place an event which our Lord himself has so confined to *a particular time*—be that time when it may—an event confined expressly by “*immediately after the tribulation of those days*,”—to apply it to as many events as we may think fit, is a liberty for which some warrant should be ascertained ; for it cannot be derived from a prediction which is asserted to have been *all* fulfilled many centuries ago. But without even professing to have express authority for so doing, you again and again spoke of the prediction, “pointing forward to the grand consummation” or end of time, for a more splendid accomplishment. If such a glory has already been displayed in their accomplishment, what a glory shall be seen, you on one occasion exclaimed, “when they shall have their *full* and *entire* fulfilment”! Such an expression certainly does convey the idea that its full and entire accomplishment the prediction had not yet received ; and, as afraid of the consequences of such a statement, you immediately added, (with what consistency it must be left for you to explain,) “not that I would say that they have *not* had their proper application to the event of Jerusalem’s destruction, but Christ’s coming shall be progressive.” As I cannot comprehend the meaning of a progressive coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven, especially when expressly declared to be immediately after an event which is particularized, I make no farther attempt at reply.

But your view of our Lord’s prediction of his Coming having *a leaning* and *looking forward* beyond the period to which you suppose it to be directly applied, is of sufficient importance to merit more attentive examination. Unwilling as you may be to admit the fact, this is indeed to say that *all* has *not* been fulfilled ; for the change of expression does not in the least alter the idea conveyed. To say that the prophecy has a leaning or looking forward to the end of time, is certainly to say that it *does predict something* concerning the end of time. This therefore is in direct opposition to the view of *all* having been absolutely fulfilled before the then living generation had ceased to exist. The

consequence of the establishment of this principle, if it could be maintained, would therefore be the subversion of your more general interpretation. But on what authority is it advanced? It is derived from no statement contained in either of the gospels. The prediction itself affords not the least countenance to the idea of its having a leaning or looking forward to any event besides that to which it is directly applied. The very express terms by which it is restricted to one particular period absolutely excludes its reference to any other. The expressions "in those days," "immediately after the tribulation of those days," "that day," and "then," frequently employed, are too definite and precise to admit of loose or varying interpretation—or of application to different and dissimilar events.

On what then is the opinion of the prophecy having a double reference founded? Is it not on the very circumstance that the sublimities of the prediction do *not* appear to have been really exhausted? After all you have said of *the entire* fulfilment of the prediction before that generation had died, I still suspect that your view of double reference arises from a conviction, (however unwillingly entertained,) that the destruction of Jerusalem is not an event to which the expressions properly apply.

But whatever may be the reason on which such an interpretation is founded, the idea of the prophecy having a *second* reference to the Saviour's personal Return, virtually destroys the foundation on which the *primary* reference is supposed to rest, namely, that the *whole* prediction was fulfilled before the generation then living had ceased to exist. If the prophecy *has* a reference to any event still future, then it was *not* all fulfilled, but only *a part* of it at the time fixed by the Saviour himself. Not only so, indeed; but if the intimation of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, be a prophecy both of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the personal Return of the Redeemer, besides your thus supposing it only *in part* fulfilled before that generation had died, you suppose *by far the most important part* as still remaining to be accomplished—just in as far as the Return of the Redeemer will transcend in importance the destruction of Jerusalem. And yet with such an opinion you still affirm that the fulfilment of that minor part of the prophecy was its entire accomplishment.

But this view of a double reference, even if fully admitted affects not the question concerning *the period* of Christ's real return. For if, as is supposed, the first reference be to the destruction of Jerusalem, and if this be the only one having the time fixed, then may the second reference, (by which is meant Christ's personal return,) be applied to any other time, as properly at least as that to which you and those taking the same view are pleased to apply it. If *no time* be fixed in the prophecy itself for the accomplishment of its *second* reference, then have Antimillenarians no more warrant for fixing it *subsequent* to the Millennium, than Millenarians would have to presume that it will precede that glorious day, independently of all other evidence. And accordingly, among those who hold the opinion of double reference, there are some who do believe in the premillennial Return of the Saviour. And certainly if the idea of a double reference be at all entertained, this view is of the two by far the most consistent with the declarations of our Lord. It is the unquestionable fact, whatever may be the correct interpretation, that, in the narration at least, the evangelist Luke (xxi. 24—27,) places the Coming of the Son of man subsequent to the close of the times of the Gentiles, and consequently at the beginning of the Millennium. If then in the prediction some must suppose from Matthew's gospel a first reference of that coming to be at the destruction of Jerusalem, it certainly appears more reasonable to place the *second* reference at the close of the times of the Gentiles with Luke, than arbitrarily to postpone it beyond the Millennium altogether, to a time to which it is not pretended there is in the prediction itself the most remote allusion.

But I must now observe that *no assurance* of a real personal return of the Son of man *ever* taking place can be obtained from the prophecy, if the idea of a double reference is allowed. For if the prophecy was *all* fulfilled before the generation in whose life it was uttered had passed away, then was it all *once* fulfilled *without any personal return*. And if the first reference was thus accomplished, then may the Second be so also, without any personal coming. If a prediction of Christ's coming in the clouds of heaven was *once* really and actually fulfilled without any indication of such an event—if a prediction of His being seen so coming by all the tribes of the earth was once accomplished without any

of them having been actual witnesses—if the angels have once been sent forth, and have really gathered together God's elect from one end of heaven to the other, without either the saints dead being rescued from the tomb or those alive being removed from their habitations—if all this has once taken place without its being known, or believed, or suspected, then what warrant is there that it ever will be otherwise at any future period? This argument acquires additional strength when we observe that the time past for the fulfilment of the prophecy—the time of the *first* reference, as is supposed—is that to which *alone* the prophecy itself is believed directly to apply. If there is only one time in the prediction itself, and this be considered as undoubtedly the period of Jerusalem's destruction, there is certainly no reason to conclude that it will be *more truly* fulfilled, at a time concerning which the prophecy is altogether silent. If any second reference there be, the probability certainly is, that its manifestation, instead of being much more specific than what took place at the time directly promised, will be still less obvious and distinct. Thus the natural consequence of supposing, without direct authority, the idea of a double reference in the prediction, is to destroy altogether the assurance from it of our Lord's personal return.

Having thus examined at so much length the idea of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven being expressive of mere temporal judgments, and having endeavoured to exhibit the inconsistencies and untenable nature of the opinion of our Lord's prediction containing a double reference, permit me to indulge the hope, that as the inquiry has been useful to myself, it may also be blessed to you, which is the sincere desire of,

Reverend Sir,

Yours with Christian affection, &c.

LETTER VII.

ON THE VIEWS AND QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES,
AND THE PRECEDING PREDICTION OF OUR LORD
DELIVERED IN THE TEMPLE, (Mat. xxiii. 37—39,) AS
CONFIRMATORY OF HIS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS
OF HEAVEN BEING HIS PERSONAL RETURN.

REVEREND SIR,

Although in previous Letters, numerous arguments have been adduced which might be regarded as sufficient to determine the question concerning the nature of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, the evidence is by no means exhausted. In every aspect in which our Lord's prediction can be viewed it appears in a light which renders your interpretation inadmissible. In no point of view, however, does this more conspicuously appear, than when considering the circumstances which gave rise to the prediction of our Lord, the character and views of those to whom it was addressed, and the nature of the questions to which it is professedly the reply.

It is certainly of considerable importance to attend to the circumstances which prompted the inquiry of the disciples concerning the Coming of the Lord. By what circumstance or event then was it immediately suggested? This question admits of easy solution. They had just before been with Him in the Temple when He said unto the Jews, "Ye shall not see me *henceforth*, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Mat. xxiii. 39. From this statement, which it will be proper more particularly to examine, the disciples had been taught that He would be *personally absent* for a certain time; and it was evidently under this impression that they addressed to Him the question concerning His Coming. When therefore our Lord made answer in such terms as must have confirmed them in the view which they had already taken of His personal absence, can we doubt that it was really of this and of his subsequent return that the Saviour spake? And again it is to be noticed that here the period of absence corresponds exactly with the time he afterwards

fixed for His Return. It is at the conversion of the Jews: “Ye shall not see me henceforth, *till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;*” that is, till they should acknowledge him their Messiah. This the Saviour must have said, not of the Priests and Pharisees whom he then more particularly addressed, but of the *nation* of which they were the *representatives*, just as his disciples were next addressed as the representatives of the Christian church. Jesus had just accused their nation of the most heinous crimes, and had also denounced his judgments upon them, as those who should kill and crucify the prophets, and wise men, and scribes, whom he should send unto them. In this he predicted the sufferings believers afterwards endured at the hands of the Jews generally, and not merely of those whom he now addressed. In the same representative character he said unto them, “Behold *your House* is left unto *you* desolate.” The Temple was not their private property, but the glory of *their nation*; and *to them* it was left desolate or deserted. When, therefore, our Lord adds, “For I say unto *you*, YE shall not see me henceforth, *till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*” it must also be of the Jews, *as such*, that He speaks.

Thus then Christ was not again *to be seen* by the Jewish nation, till they call him “Blessed.” This, however, they never yet have done. Certainly they did not at the destruction of Jerusalem; nor will they do so till the period of their conversion, at the commencement of the Millennium,—when therefore our Lord thus taught them to expect His Return.

This very distinct and important prediction always has perplexed, and ever must, those commentators who deny the premillennial Return of Christ. As the easiest method of getting rid of the difficulty, Grotius altered the text—making it “*till ye would be glad to say, or wish you had said, Blessed is He that cometh.*” This reading Dr. Doddridge would gladly have adopted, “could the version *be justified*;” but this he could not do for himself, and I am not aware of any other having yet attempted to do it. Inseparable as is the connection between this prediction and that afterwards delivered in reply to the questions to which it gave rise, and important as it therefore must be for deter-

mining the nature of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, it is remarkable that it should not have occupied more of Mr. Faber's attention. Containing as it does statements calculated much to illustrate our Lord's enlarged prediction of His Return, I must hold that Exposition materially defective which embraces not a consideration of the one which led to it; and consider as essentially incorrect, that interpretation with which it does not coincide. Yet Mr. Faber who has dwelt at much length on Mat. xxiv, dismisses this prediction in the 23d chapter, by simply calling it an announcement concerning the Jews, that "their House or Temple should be left unto them desolate." vol. I. p. 197. Scott also passes over it with the single observation, "no doubt but their present dispersion, and unbelief, and their *future conversion* to Christ are here predicted," as if it contained not the slightest intimation of our Lord's Return.* It is, however, very evident, that in our Lord's estimation, His absence is the most important point; and, in our inquiry, the duration of that absence is the most prominent question. And must not the nature of his absence and that of his coming be the same? And that as the former has been personal, so must be the latter? If, when He said, ye shall *not* see me till a certain time, he intimated his personal departure for a specified period, it necessarily follows that his coming then will be personal also. Now that it was his corporeal absence of which the Saviour spoke is obvious, not only from his expressly declaring, "ye shall not *see* me," but from the connection in which he has placed it with their then present perception of him as a man. "Ye shall not see me *henceforth*," clearly implies his being then seen, and to the Jews, this is what he was not in any other sense than with the bodily organs of vision. In the same sense therefore will He be again seen when the Jews recognize Him as their Redeemer. They will then hail him with the welcome, "Blessed is He *that cometh* in the name of the Lord."

But Christ also predicts the desolation of the Temple

* Having mislaid my notes of your discourse on the passage, I do not refer particularly to your own interpretation.

during His absence: "Behold *your House* is left unto you desolate; *for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh.*" In this He does not merely speak of the desolation afterwards brought upon the Temple by the Romans, and of its being laid in ruins. Before that time it had been left desolate. It became so when Christ himself left it. The desolation predicted, *consisted*, indeed, in his very absence. It was left desolate, *for they would not see Him*. The word, you know, means *deserted*, and this desertion was that which resulted from His departure. But Christ also states a period for the *termination* of this desolation or desertion of the Temple. It will not always continue in this state, but only till His Return at their conversion. It is left desolate only "*till*" they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh." The desolation of the Temple is coeval with Christ's absence, and both are limited in their duration,—continuing only until the submission of the Jews to Jesus as their Messiah, which we know will be before the Millennium. Now I have already noticed, (p. 52,) that the prophet Daniel predicts the continued *destruction* of both the city and the Sanctuary till the same time, till "*the consummation*" or *end* of the age,—till the great outpouring, when "*that determined shall be poured upon the desolator,*" just at the commencement of the Millennium. If, therefore, my interpretation concerning our Lord's absence and coming be correct, the Temple must also be re-erected before the Millennium. Were there indeed no other evidence of the fact than this prediction of the Saviour, I think that from it this is the legitimate deduction. But the evidence of this is neither scanty nor ambiguous. Little as the matter is attended to by those who deny the premillennial Return of Christ, it is very distinctly foretold by several of the prophets, although I mean not to enter into farther examination of it here.* Suffice it to observe,

* That the Temple will be rebuilt, I have in the 13th Section of my "Connected View," endeavoured to demonstrate. Till the arguments there advanced are fairly met, it is unnecessary to resume the discussion. You may assert, as you did yesterday, (July 10th,) that "*altars will no more smoke, nor victims bleed;*" but turn the period ever so smoothly, it will not extenuate in the least, the sin of putting a negation on God's revealed will. I can tell you on the

that not only is the re-erection of the Temple predicted, but of *that* Temple the east or *front gate* is solely appropriated to the Lord. "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and *no man* shall enter in by it; because *the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it*, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the Prince." Ezek. xliv. 2, 3. It was on account of their sins that the Temple was at all left desolate or deserted ; for the connection in which

very highest authority, that after Israel's Restoration to their land, Heaven *has* prescribed "*ordinances of the altar*, in the day when they shall make it, *to offer burnt-offerings thereon*, and to *sprinkle blood* thereon." Ezek. xlivi. 18. Be it as repugnant as it may to your ideas or your wishes, I must tell you, that God has expressly commanded, (and He will not be gainsayed,) "Thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me to minister unto me, saith the Lord God, a *young bullock*, for a sin-offering. And thou shalt take of the *blood thereof*, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four horns of the settle, and upon the border thereof round about ; thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it. Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin-offering, and he shall *burn it* in the appointed place of the House, *without* the Sanctuary. And on the *second day*, thou shalt *offer a kid of the goats*, without blemish, for a sin-offering ; and they shall *cleanse the altar*, as they did cleanse it with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a *young bullock* without blemish, and a *ram* out of the flock, without blemish. And thou shalt offer them before the Lord ; and the priests shall cast salt upon them ; and they shall *offer them up* for a *burnt-offering* unto the Lord. *Seven days* shalt thou prepare *every day a goat*, for a *sin-offering* : they shall also prepare a *young bullock*, and a *ram* out of the flock without blemish. *Seven days* shall they purge the *altar*, and purify it." Ezek. xlivi. 19—26. Receive it as you may, there shall then be devoted, as it is expressly demanded, "one lamb out of the flock *out of two hundred*, out of the fat pastures of Israel, for a *meat-offering*, and for a *burnt-offering*, and for peace-offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord God. All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the Prince in Israel." Ezek. xlvi. 15, 16. Deny it as you dare, God has said, "Thou shalt *daily* prepare a *burnt-offering* unto the Lord, of a *lamb* of the *first year*, without blemish ; thou shalt prepare it *every morning*." Ezek. xlvi. 13. "And the *burnt-offering* that the Prince shall offer unto the Lord in the *Sabbath-day*, shall be *six lambs* without blemish, and a *ram* without blemish." Ezek. xlvi. 4. While these, the institutions of Heaven, given unto his ancient people to be observed after their Restoration and Conversion, remain a part of God's revealed will, and thus brought fully under notice, think you, can he be guiltless of the awful charge of wilful rejection of His truth, who can himself believe, or teach to others, that "altars will no more smoke, nor victims bleed" ?

this is placed by the Saviour, is that of its being a punishment for their rejection of Himself, and their persecution of his people. But when they shall be converted, and restored to their land, that Temple, in which was formerly the manifested presence of the living God, and which constituted their highest honour in their holiest days, will be re-erected, and here the Son of man shall receive the homage of an adoring world. Yes, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

What I now wish particularly to notice is, the connection between this prediction of our Lord of his personal absence and return, with the views of His disciples when they shortly after put the question,—"What shall be the sign of *thy coming?*" It was this prediction in the Temple, evidently, which immediately suggested the inquiry. And the inquiry itself was concerning that coming which he had promised in the temple would take place when He was acknowledged by the Jews in his true character and worth, and work. This coming, which the Saviour himself had thus taught them to regard as personal, and to be at the conversion of their nation, was therefore that which in his answer to their question, He informed them would be "in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

Independently, however, of the connection between our Lord's prediction to the Jews, and the question put to Him by the disciples on Mount Olivet, they did expect Him gloriously to appear for the erection of His Kingdom on the earth. This is a fact which admits of ample proof, and which no one attempts to deny. However much their views have been stigmatized as carnal, it is admitted that this hope they did entertain from first to last, during their Master's ministry, unaffected as it would seem by the many reproofs He is asserted to have administered, and the many intimations of the contrary He is supposed to have given. Disposed as I may be to call for the proof of a single instance in which our Lord has so rebuked their expectations, this is not my present purpose; but rather to allude to the fact, in the way of farther accounting for the questions put by them on this occasion. The circumstance by which they were more immediately suggested, I shall again notice, but confine myself meanwhile to this general expectation, as illustrative of their views in the inquiry concern-

ing the sign of His coming. *They* at least, it will be admitted, had no notion, previously, of a *figurative* coming of Christ. "Perhaps they had a general idea," Scott remarks, "that He would go from them for a time, before He set up His Kingdom; that He would at length come in a very glorious manner, according to several intimations which *He had given them*; that He would then execute the predicted vengeance on His enemies, destroy the temple, terminate that dispensation, and introduce His own glorious reign as the Messiah." This is a point of no small importance. For if it was His personal return to which they referred, when He should come "in a very glorious manner," the Saviour was not ignorant of their views, and our ideas of his prediction ought to be formed under this impression. The first question which suggests itself with regard to the error or accuracy of *their* views, will then be, Does Christ say any thing calculated to destroy their cherished hopes, and to intimate *to them* that although they inquire concerning His personal Return, He now answers them rather concerning *a figurative* coming? If their expectations concerning his personal coming in a very glorious manner was, as Scott supposes, founded on "several intimations which *He had given them*," this correction was the more necessary had these expectations been erroneous. Our Lord, however, gives them no intimation of their being in error concerning the nature of his coming, but without any such intimation, proceeds to answer their questions *as if they were correct*, while you suppose He in reality speaks of something entirely different from that about which they inquire. The inference which I therefore deduce from this fact is, that it is indeed His personal coming he predicts as being "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." For if such impressions were on their minds, our Lord's whole prediction was calculated to confirm these as giving them his utmost countenance,—and as we cannot believe our Lord designed either to lead them into error or to confirm them in it, I feel that His integrity demands the rejection of your interpretation of His having foretold, without acknowledgment, a *figurative* coming, in answer to an inquiry about a *personal* one.

It still remains that I examine more particularly the questions of the disciples, in order to ascertain their pre-

cise import in relation to our inquiry as to whether the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will be figurative or personal. In all the three Gospels in which our Lord's prediction is recorded, it is represented as an answer to the two questions addressed to Him by the disciples. Matthew narrates it thus : "And Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple; and His disciples came to him, for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, *When shall THESE THINGS be?* *And what shall be the sign of THY COMING and of the end of the world?*" Mat. xxiv. 1—3.

Concerning the questions themselves, as well as the views of those by whom they were put, there has been very considerable diversity of opinion. Mr. Faber considers the disciples as combining in one question the coming of the Lord with the destruction of Jerusalem; and supposes them to have made this combination from a recollection of the prophecy, Zech. xiv. 1—9, in connection with Christ's present prediction of the destruction of the Temple. *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 209. But where is there any evidence that the disciples *did* so connect the coming of the Lord with the destruction of the city, or of the temple? No such evidence can I perceive. On the contrary, they appear entirely to disconnect them, presenting their inquiries concerning both in distinct and separate questions. In reference to the Saviour's prediction of the destruction of the temple, when one stone should not be left upon another, they ask, "When shall these things be?" while in their next inquiry, they connect His coming with the end of the age : "And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" They do not regard these last events as belonging to different periods, and requiring distinct signs, to be separately ascertained; but intimate their sense of a subsisting connection, by which one sign shall serve the purpose of foreshowing both—the single "sign" answering the purpose of premonition both "of thy coming and of the end of the world," or age.

The propriety of my adopted rendering of the last word

in this question, it is not now necessary to vindicate. "Age," it is admitted on all hands, is the real meaning of the word used in the original; and the necessity of adopting it is greater on your interpretation than it is on mine. However inconsistently you apply to the period of Jerusalem's destruction, that part of our Lord's prediction, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, *and then shall THE END come;*" that application renders unnecessary any other authority, since it proves that "the end of the world" in the question of the disciples would, in your estimation, be better rendered "the end of the age."

With this slight correction, for the sake of others rather than for yourself,—yet really of considerable importance to the proper understanding both of the question and the answer—let me now examine a little more minutely the questions themselves, and the views given of them, and see how these may bear in the illustration of a personal or figurative Coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. "I cannot believe," says Mr. Faber, "as some commentators appear to have imagined, that the combination of these two inquiries, on the part of the disciples, arose from their recollection of Christ's antecedently delivered prophecy respecting his figurative advent, to destroy Jerusalem through the secondary human agency of Titus and the Romans, as detailed in Luke xvii. 22—37, and as referred to in Mat. xvi. 27, 28. Mark viii. 38. ix. 1. Luke ix. 26, 27." *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 211. Authority for such an application of these texts he does not even *attempt* to produce, while he wholly overlooks the *more recent* prediction in the Temple. It is not, however, necessary for me again to enter into a consideration of the unwarranted idea of the Coming of the Son of man being either through Titus, or the Romans, or "through the secondary human agency" of any other.* But the combination of these

* The inconsistencies of great and good men in this controversy, and the nature of many of the interpretations into which they have been driven to avoid the unwelcome truth, have excited my astonishment beyond any thing else I have ever witnessed which either claims or obtains a place among the fruits of piety or the efforts of intellect. Mr. Faber, as I have already noticed, rejects as a "vulgar error" your interpretation of our Lord's prediction of his com-

questions was doubtless suggested by some circumstance which may perhaps be ascertained. Having rejected that particular prediction and the recollection of it by the disciples, as the ground of combination, Mr. Faber, however, supposes an explanation of the "peculiar mode of putting the question" adopted by the disciples, is afforded "by the writings of two of the most ancient Hebrew prophets, Zechariah and Daniel," referring to Zech. xiv. 1—5, Dan. vii. 13, 14. *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 207.

Besides the evidence I have already adduced in the consideration of the circumstances and previous prediction of our Lord, I think Mr. Faber mistaken in supposing such a connection. In both of these passages, there is indeed an express prediction of the premillennial coming of the Lord, but in neither of them is there any intimation of *the end of the age*; and although the first cited contains a prediction of the *future* sacking of Jerusalem after the Restoration of Israel to their land, nothing is there said of the overthrow or the desolation of the Temple; and, so far as appears at least, our Lord had not said a word concerning the destruction of Jerusalem as a city, previous to the disciples having asked their complex question. There is also this important circumstance to be attended to, which Mr. Faber wholly overlooks, that Zechariah does *not* predict Christ's "figurative advent to *destroy* Jerusalem." If it be a figurative advent at all of which this prophet speaks, it is for a very different purpose. Whatever "secondary human agency" is to effect that destruction, *it is for the overthrow of that agency* the coming of the Lord is then announced. In his righteous indignation against the sin of his ancient people, God will, indeed, "gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;" but when *they* shall have accomplished his work of judgment in the sacking of the city, the Redeemer himself will avenge their cause on those who have unjustly attacked them, for "*then* shall

ing in the clouds of heaven, as having been fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem; while, in the extract made above, with you he applies as unquestionable a perfectly parallel passage to that very event. Let me recommend to your attention, and to that of Mr. Faber, the masterly remarks of the Rev. W. Anderson on Luke xvii. in *Part Second* of his "Apology for Millennial Doctrine in the Form in which it was entertained in the Primitive Church," pp. 72—75.

the Lord go forth, and fight *against* those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." Zech. xiv. 1—4. It is not for *the destruction of Jerusalem*, therefore, that the Lord doth come, but for its rescue, by the destruction of those *nations* which shall destroy Jerusalem; and thus, so far is the Redeemer from identifying his advent with this "secondary human agency," that he makes the distinction perfectly obvious. The same distinction is, I think, evidently made by his disciples also, when they put first the question concerning the destruction of the Temple, which the Saviour had intimated just before, "When shall these things be?" and *then* inquire, "And what shall be the sign of thy Coming and of the end of the age?"

On examining the parallel passages however, we find that the questions of the disciples are not given in the same form by the different evangelists. Mark and Luke *seem* as if they had wholly omitted the question concerning the Coming of Christ and the end of the age. From this it has even been supposed, and was given as your own opinion on one occasion, that the only object of the disciples was to inquire regarding the destruction of Jerusalem or the Temple, and the sign of it. But supposing that this had been the only point of inquiry in the questions of the disciples, as recorded by the two evangelists named, this would by no means prove that no inquiry had been made concerning *the coming of the Lord*. Matthew informs us expressly, that besides asking, "When shall *these* things be?" referring to what the Saviour had repeated respecting the overthrow of the Temple, they *did* also ask, "What shall be the sign of *thy coming* and of the end of the age?" Instead therefore of supposing that the only question the disciples put was relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, it had been more reasonable to think they had put three. And this is the conclusion to which Mr. Cuninghame has come. Understanding the disciples not only to ask *the sign of Christ's coming*, but also *the sign* when the Temple should be destroyed, he arranges the questions thus,— "When shall these things be? What sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?" *Dissert. on*

Apocalypse, p. 220. Still, this supposed second question, I apprehend, is founded on a mistake of Mark's meaning, which perhaps accords more nearly with that of Matthew than is generally supposed. The latter is the only one of the evangelists who states the precise question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?" but the same thing is, I think, implied in the Second question of all the three, "When shall these things be? And what shall be *the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?*" Mark xiii. 4. "When shall these things be? And *what sign* will there be when these things *come to pass?*" Luke xxi. 7.

I do not understand the evangelists Mark and Luke to intimate an expressed desire on the part of the disciples to obtain *a sign* when the destruction of the Temple is *about to commence*, which is Mr. Cunningham's view; but rather when its desolation should be completed. The last question actually is, as expressed by Mark, "What shall be the sign when all these things *shall be fulfilled?*" Yet it cannot be supposed that the disciples merely ask a sign by which to ascertain *when* it has been *laid in ruins*, or *when* one stone shall cease to lie upon another. No sign could be required to intimate that it *had been* destroyed. The fact itself would be the evidence of its accomplishment, *after* the prediction was "*fulfilled*." Yet the question really is not concerning the commencement or progress of the predicted event; but, "What shall be the sign when all these things *shall be fulfilled?*" The question as stated by Luke, "What sign will there be when these things *shall come to pass?*" is apparently to be understood also in the same way of *the entire completion* of the things spoken of—not when they *begin* to take place, but when they *have come to pass*." Attention to this circumstance may perhaps add much to the perspicuity of the questions as stated by these evangelists. For it is to be noticed that in both Mark and Luke, as well as in Matthew, there is a preceding question concerning the destruction of the Temple, "When shall these things be?" The second question we might therefore expect to be of the same import, as recorded by the different evangelists, even if the expression should be varied by either. And so I believe it to be. For, as Matthew records that question to have been concerning *the*

sign of the coming of Christ and the end of the age, so I think that, as stated by Mark and Luke, the desire of the disciples is to obtain *the sign* of the completion or fulfilment of all that term of the Temple's desolation which is to precede the coming of Christ and the end of the age; or, being aware that His coming will be preceded by a sign, they ask, “*What* shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?” Remembering his prediction recently delivered in the Temple that He should be absent for a time, the duration of which would be coeval with the desolation of that Temple, in putting the question concerning the sign of the completion or fulfilment of its desolation, they do virtually ask concerning the sign of the coming of the Son of man, inserted distinctly in the question, as recorded by Matthew. From our Lord's repeatedly warning them in the progress of his prediction that “*the end* is not immediately,” we may infer that they really had been inquiring about it, which they certainly would be, if asking when the desolation of the Temple should “be fulfilled.” And what is the next great event, as detailed in our Lord's prediction, as immediately subsequent to the termination of Jewish desolation, about the sign of which they were so solicitous? It is just “the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; but when Gentile oppressions shall cease,—“when all these things shall be fulfilled,” the celestial signs appear which precede the coming of our Lord. Assured by the Saviour of his absence during the Temple's desolation before he left the precincts of that hallowed building, the earnest inquiry of the disciples was directed to ascertain *the sign* which should intimate the full accomplishment of God's wrath—when all the purposes of His vengeance should be fulfilled, and the more auspicious era of his favour be restored; and thus they embrace in the single question, “*What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?*”

But what a marvellous change has been effected in the course of our argument! Why the disciples themselves have now become the abettors of a *Figurative Coming*! With all their absurd and fanciful notions about a temporal Kingdom and a Divine King, when they would inquire about *the destruction of Jerusalem*, they ask the Saviour

in all good faith, "What shall be the sign of *thy Coming?*" So for once they have become *orthodox* even on this subject in the estimation of those modern Antimillenarians who would accommodate the question as recorded by Matthew to their own notions of it as stated by Mark and Luke. This, however, was ground which, though you once took, you did not attempt to keep. On the contrary, you held them to be full of prejudices at the very time they addressed their Lord concerning His Coming. But if the disciples were then labouring under the influence of prejudice concerning their Master's coming, He himself contributed largely to their adopting and continuing in that error. Their questions, as I have shown, were naturally suggested by his former prediction in the Temple, and every word of his present magnificent prediction must have confirmed the views they had adopted on the subject, or rather which they had ever entertained. It is admitted, indeed, in Henry's Commentary, that Christ in his answer, "doth *not* expressly rectify the mistakes of his disciples. *That*," it is added, "must be done by the pouring out of the Spirit." I have yet to show what was the nature of their mistakes which the Spirit rectified, as also the manner in which this was done. But was the Spirit to correct their Master's discourse also? According to the interpretation put upon it, this seems equally necessary, if not for the then illuminated disciples, at least for all who came after them. As it stands, it has all the evidence which could possibly be required of being a direct and deliberate statement concerning a personal coming, to a plain and distinct question concerning a coming of that nature. Any correction, therefore, of the views of those by whom the question was put, made *afterwards* upon their minds by the Holy Spirit, affects not in the least the morality which you impute to our Lord in giving for the time a deceitful answer, nor does it even exhibit to others the prediction itself in any different light.

But neither you nor any one holding similar views, have yet shown why the rectification of *this* mistake must be left to be effected by the Holy Spirit afterwards, rather than be done by Christ himself. And certainly no one ever will succeed in showing why the Saviour, *instead* of rectifying it, should have done much—should have done

every thing, in fact—to confirm them in that error! Nor has any one yet attempted to show why all the evangelists should have conspired in this instance also to conceal from all their readers the great mistake into which they had fallen on the subject of the Kingdom; or why the author of the Acts of the Apostles should likewise have failed to record the subversion of all their views, when Pentecost had shed its illumination on their minds.

But is it really possible to conceive, under all the circumstances, that our blessed Lord did not speak of His personal Return, but of a figurative Coming? That with the perfect knowledge that his disciples were come to inquire concerning a personal Coming, He should, instead of objecting to their views, proceed immediately to answer their question as if all was perfectly right—that he should not only gratify them, for the time at least, by declaring minutely the *manner* of his coming, but in the most strict accordance with their request, should give them *the sign* of that coming, by enumerating the various important circumstances by which it should be preceded, and by the fulfilment of which its approach might be discerned; the earliest of which signs, experience soon proved to have been literally stated, as time has since demonstrated the same concerning those which followed,—to believe all this, and still to suppose the disciples altogether wrong in their expectations, and the Saviour as intimating something very different from that about which they inquired, requires a kind and degree of credulity which I am not ashamed to avow I do not possess.

It is not a little remarkable, moreover, if our Lord really did *not* mean to intimate his personal return but the destruction of Jerusalem, that his language was not *more adapted* to lead to the idea he must have wished to suppress, than it was unfitted to communicate the knowledge he desired to convey. Can we believe, that if the event the disciples were really to expect was the destruction of Jerusalem alone, that the Saviour would not, by the choice of his language, have more distinctly shown this to be the case. The most effectual method of suppressing their notions of a personal coming, would have been to have simply set before them that destruction in its native horrors, to do in short as on other occasions he did when the foretelling

of that event was his sole object. The simple quotation of any of the Old Testament prophecies concerning it, or the use of similar language—highly figurative as those prophecies are said to be—would have been sufficient at once to annihilate these fallacious hopes. The language of Moses on the subject, or of any one of his successors, would not only have been better fitted for bringing into subjection their high imaginations, but would more obviously have expressed the capture of their city and the overthrow of their venerated polity, than any prediction of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. They would thus have learned that “*a nation* of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young,” would come against them and subdue them. If Christ had even continued to use such language as he has employed in that part of this very prediction in which he does speak of the destruction of Jerusalem, when it should be “compassed with armies,” and of its being “trodden down of the Gentiles,” the very possibility of mistake had been removed. But our Lord, in speaking of His coming, uses very different language, and language conveying very different ideas. His every word must have convinced the disciples that it was of his real and proper return He now spake. The prediction exhibits no proof of the Saviour’s displeasure—it conveys no reproof of the carnal notions of his disciples—it contains no corrective of their deep-rooted prejudices in favour of a glorious Messiah—it presented no information requisite for men who had, upon the subject, greatly mistaken their Master’s meaning. If, by his declaration to their rulers, they had been led to believe that He would absent himself from them till they manifested towards Him a very different spirit, and were willing to welcome Him as their long-desired Messiah, every word He now uttered in reply to their own inquiry concerning his return was calculated to lead them to the conviction that his prediction was really a reply to their question, and that his personal return at the Conversion of the Jews would be “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” The conclusion therefore at which I am again under the necessity of arriving is, that this was the glorious event which he so magnificently predicts.

The force of these remarks is much increased when we

consider the *character* of the persons by whom our Lord was addressed, and to whom His prediction was given. These were not his enemies set to entrap him, but *his disciples*—his real and devoted friends. It was not even in the presence of a mixed multitude, some of whom might have misconstrued his words;—the prediction was delivered to them “privately.” Mat. xxiv. 3. His Return was not a matter of little consequence to them, and about which they had merely dropped a question casually;—it was a case in which they felt particularly interested, and about which they thoughtfully and formally inquire. If their ignorance had rendered it necessary, such circumstances must have induced the Saviour carefully to correct the views of the inquirers, and to have warned them most distinctly that he now, in speaking of his “Coming,” used the word in a very different sense from that in which it had been employed by them. Even his most implacable enemies the Saviour never deceived. If at any time he declined gratifying their impertinent curiosity,—or rejected the claims of their usurped authority—or refused new signs to their want of faith,—if he corrected their mistakes or exposed their sins, all was done in openness and in candour. They knew when the Redeemer refused compliance with their wishes; they were perfectly aware when corrected or reproved; they ran no hazard of mistaking his meaning, though they may have been denied the information requested, or have been frustrated in their ensnaring designs. And if the Saviour was thus open in his dealings with his determined foes; if to them his language was distinct and unambiguous, can we suppose that to his bosom friends—his most-beloved of the number—it should be the very opposite? Are we really to believe that these friends, to whom He had made known his design of leaving the world for a time, when they had chosen for themselves an opportunity to inquire *privately* concerning his return, instead of receiving an answer to their inquiry, should be told only of *something else*, and that too without the slightest hint that it was so, while all the language employed, and the circumstances mentioned, must have led them to conclude that he truly spake of His Return?

The importance of a distinct understanding by the disciples, of the Saviour’s meaning, is farther evident, when we

consider that the answer to their questions was not to be by them kept a profound secret, and hushed in silence so soon as they left their present retirement. It would be told to all their friends; it would be threatened to their enemies; and it was to be put on record by inspired men, *as the answer to these questions*, by which future generations, of friends and of foes, up to the very hour, whosoever this may be, when the Son of man shall be revealed from heaven in glory and in majesty.

The dangers arising from their being deceived would not even in a direct way be confined to these disciples. They were to be the future teachers of others: and to be intrusted with the institutions of their Master. It was therefore of the utmost importance that their views should be rightly directed. And during their whole journeyings with Jesus, have we not perceived his tender solicitude for their instruction, and watchful care for the correctness of their opinions. His love would not admit of his allowing them to remain in error. This they well knew, from frequent experience; and upon it they could calculate with safety. They could reason from their knowledge of Christ that not only would he abhor directly to deceive them by speaking of a figurative coming in language which they could only apply to a coming that is personal, or in the way of answering their inquiries concerning a personal coming by concealed intimations concerning a figurative coming; but, from intimate acquaintance with His character, they could infer the accuracy of their own understanding of his prediction, since he had never blamed them for misunderstanding it. They would call to remembrance how on other occasions he had corrected their mistaken ideas, divulging for this purpose the unexpressed thoughts of the heart. Luke ix. 47. They could remember that when they had at a certain time pressed Him to eat, and had been answered that He had meat to eat of which they knew not, when they thence supposed some man had brought him bread in their absence, "Jesus saith unto them, *my meat* is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." John iv. 31—34.

There were indeed occasions on which we are informed they did not understand their Master. "For He taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is de-

livered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after that he is killed he shall rise the third day. *But they understood not that saying*, and were afraid to ask him.”

Mark ix. 31, 32. Although our Lord spake to them in the plainest terms of his sufferings and death, their minds had been perverted by those false views or expositions of prophecy by which the humiliation of the Messiah was explained away. The difficulties thus experienced in understanding the above prediction by their Master did not arise from any ambiguity or mystery in his language; but, by the adoption of a system of inconsistent interpretation, they had been taught to reject the literal meaning of the predictions of Messiah’s sufferings, while they willingly received in its proper sense the language of those which related to his glory. By the same error which now leads the Christian church to explain away one class of predictions, while they receive literally the other, the disciples could not comprehend the Saviour when he spake of his sufferings as predicted by the prophets, although he spake in terms than which plainer could not have been employed. This was yet more remarkably exemplified when “He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day He shall rise again. *And they understood none of these things.*” Luke xviii. 31—34. This shows very clearly how the plainest and most distinct statement may be incomprehensible when the prejudices of men are opposed. Their difficulty arose neither from obscurity in the language, nor from any concealed sense being intended; but was the result of refusal to understand the words in their proper meaning. These predictions of our Lord were exactly fulfilled in the sufferings He endured, and nothing can justify the disbelief of the disciples,—although the conduct of the Christian church enables us more fully to account for it. Nor was it seldom that the disciples, by their prejudices, were prevented from receiving the statements communicated by the Saviour concerning His humiliation, nor have the evangelists been backward to testify

the fact. Again and again the same unjustifiable ignorance is displayed, while, on the part of the evangelists, it is thus frequently, and with perfect readiness, exposed; thus affording by each successive instance, an additional argument against the opinion of those who maintain that our Lord predicts a figurative coming, while the disciples expected one that is personal. The day after that of the Transfiguration, when Jesus had cast out an unclean spirit, the people "were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, He said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." Luke ix. 43, 44. What could be plainer than such a statement? Surely if it be not comprehended by those to whom it is addressed, the fault must be theirs. Yet in this instance also does the evangelist add, "*But they understood not this saying*, and it was hid from them that they perceived it not; and they feared to ask him of that saying." ver. 45.

On an occasion when Jesus had said unto his disciples, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees; and they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken *no bread*," the Saviour at once corrected their mistake as to the bread he meant, without waiting for their asking an explanation. And we are informed that "*then understood they* how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." Mat. xvi. 5—12.

How careful was our Lord on a former occasion that He should not be misunderstood by His disciples, when speaking in reference to the very question before us. He illustrated, by parable, His coming at the end of the age, sending his angels to "gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those which do iniquity," adding, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." The intimation of these glorious events was delivered to the multitude in parables. The disciples afterwards came privately seeking more particular information concerning them. And in his solicitude for their instruction, not only did the Saviour readily comply with their request, by minute explanations; but, by several additional parables, He furnished them with information which must have fitted

them for more readily comprehending the magnificent prophecy which has occupied so much of our attention in these sheets. The blessed Saviour was by no means indifferent as to whether or not they comprehended his instructions, but on the occasion alluded to, with condescension ineffable, “Jesus saith unto them, *Have ye understood all these things?* They say unto Him, *Yea, Lord.* Then said He unto them, therefore every scribe which is instructed into the Kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” ver. 51, 52. It was no part of our Lord’s design to conceal the fact of His Glorious Return, nor of the events by which it should either be preceded or attended. He not only taught it with pains-taking care to his disciples, but inculcated upon them the duty of making it known unto others, by imparting unto them things both new and old. Far, far indeed, from the Saviour, was the desire to deceive or mislead on the subject of his coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And when great ignorance on this subject is attributed to the disciples, in their finally putting the question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?” it seems to be utterly forgot with what fulness and precision our Lord had previously instructed them regarding these matters, until they acknowledged their entire acquaintance with the circumstances foretold, saying, “*Yea, Lord.*” Their progress in such knowledge, and this attestation to the fact, is wholly overlooked; and when at length, to complete their information on the point, they ask for *the sign* of their Lord’s Return, they are branded with incurable ignorance, and stigmatized as inveterately carnal.

Ignorant indeed the disciples were in many things; but they were not so wedded to their ignorance as we are sometimes taught to suppose. That may be said of them, which cannot be said of many of their defamers in the present day: they really desired information concerning the Glorious Advent at least, and were not reluctant to receive it. In the prospect of his absence, which the love of his disciples rendered more difficult for them to bear, the Saviour, with peculiar tenderness, consoled them with the briefness of his absence, evidently as contrasted with the duration of his abode among them at His Return. “A

little while and ye shall not see me, and again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." They, however, perceived not his meaning, but were completely perplexed. Did the Saviour then leave them in their ignorance? No: although they did not ask him for an explanation, desirous as they were of doing so, He explained Himself fully, that He was to leave them for a time, during which His people would be persecuted by the world, but that He should return in triumph, to their joy. And what was the result upon the minds of those addressed? "His disciples said unto Him, Lo, speakest thou now *plainly*, and speakest no proverb." John xvi. 16—29. Above all things was our blessed Lord careful for the instruction of those who were to be the future instructors of his church, as was often evinced by the private instructions they received relative to the topics previously illustrated in discourses addressed to the less favoured multitude. And rarely are we left to conjecture what was the result on the minds of his friends. In most cases we have the Saviour's direct correction, and there are instances in which although this is not put on record, or where, from the circumstances, no correction could have been given by Him, it has been furnished by the evangelists. This care for the preservation of the Saviour's meaning is on one occasion extended even to a general rumour, founded on a misapprehension of his words. Reproving Peter's unwarrantable curiosity concerning John, "Jesus saith unto him, *If I will* that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. *Then went this saying abroad* among the brethren, that that disciple *should not die*: Yet," adds John himself, "*Jesus said not* unto him he shall not die; but, *If I will* that he tarry till I come, *what is that to thee?* This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true." John xxi. 21—24.

Very different, you will perceive, was the reception given to the Saviour's prediction of His return in glory, to that given to the predictions of his sufferings, although related in language certainly not more obvious. They evidently recognised at once his allusion to those prophecies of Messiah which they delighted to contemplate. We read nothing now of their want of comprehension. In the ac-

counts of the prediction given at length by the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, not a word of reflection against themselves is introduced. Yet as faithful historians, they have not hesitated when in error to acknowledge it. In the present case, therefore, their views must have been correct enough. Not the most distant hint of surprise had been expressed; not a single question for explanation was addressed; not the slightest symptom of mistake is allowed to appear in the record. No prejudices now prevent them from discerning what their Master means.

Those who charge misapprehension of all that concerns the Saviour's Kingdom against the apostles, appear to consider themselves sufficiently liberal in allowing their views to have been corrected on the day of Pentecost, when they received of the outpouring of the Spirit. The charge of ignorance on this subject, (except in so far as relates to the time of the establishment of the Kingdom,) is of itself only an unsupported assumption. While the evangelists themselves notice that spiritual darkness which prevented their comprehending the prophecies concerning Christ's humiliation, they never once intimate such difficulty in comprehending those of his glory when the Saviour discoursed on the subject, nor does he ever intimate that their views regarding it were altogether erroneous. Nay, if there were the slightest ground to believe in *a variety of Comings of the Son of man*, we should have had little reason to wonder if they had experienced difficulty in understanding *to what coming* our Lord now, or on any particular occasion, referred. There is reason to conclude the apostles were better informed upon the subject, than many who bestow upon them unqualified censure. But even if the contrary were admitted, it cannot, in the present case, in the least affect the matter. With whatever ignorance they may have been chargeable, we have here the statements of our Lord himself. We are not considering, nor are we required to expound, their erroneous creed, but have simply to consider their Master's reply to a plain and intelligible question. This reply does, however, reflect satisfactory evidence of the correctness of the opinions condemned by you. These had been explicitly uttered in the presence of their Lord; and if, when they were wrong on other occasions, He corrected their mistakes, we are bound to believe that when,

instead of doing so, he answers them as if they were correct, they were so in truth. His language relative to His coming in glory is not less explicit than was that concerning his sufferings; and when viewed, as it must be, as the answer to a direct question, it is impossible to conceive how the nature of the language is to be so entirely changed by the presumed mistakes of his disciples.

But the views which it is supposed were now so erroneous, and which the Saviour certainly did nothing to correct, were all rectified, it is alleged, at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was shed forth on those who believed upon his name. The Spirit had been promised to his apostles long before. And what was the Spirit's particular work in reference to what our Lord had previously foretold? It was that of a *Remembrancer*. "*He shall teach you all things, and BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" John xiv. 26. When the Saviour in lowliness rode into Jerusalem on an ass, his friends thought not of the clear and distinct prediction which was then exactly and *literally* fulfilled: "*Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt.*" That they were ignorant of it we are expressly told, while the work of the Spirit in recalling it to recollection, is well exemplified. "*These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, THEN remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto Him.*" John xii. 15, 16. With respect to what they had seen or heard, to bring to their remembrance, was the chief work of the Spirit. In the instructions communicated by the Saviour, there was nothing mystical, requiring a *new revelation* by the Spirit to render them intelligible. All that was necessary with respect to these, was their being recalled distinctly to recollection, with the circumstances in which they were spoken, and the connection in which they were uttered. *To bring to their remembrance all that He had already told them*, the Saviour therefore promised the aids of the Holy Spirit. And this gracious promise was indeed completely fulfilled; and our Lord's important prediction concerning his return was, among others, brought distinctly to their recollection.

The *remembrance*, however, could supply nothing capa-

ble of leading them to the opinion that Christ meant a figurative coming, at the destruction of Jerusalem. They would *remember* that in the Temple He had declared that from "henceforth," or *from that time*, till the predicted desolation should cease, He should not again be seen of the Jews,—they would *remember* that it is predicted by the prophet Daniel, that the Temple and the city shall continue desolate until the end or "consummation," and that this period will arrive only when that determined is poured upon the "*desolator*" of Judea;—they would probably *remember* that, in another prediction by Daniel, the Coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven, instead of being placed at the destruction of Jerusalem, was at the overthrow of the blasphemous little horn, or Papal man of sin, at the commencement of the Millennium ;—they might perhaps *remember*, that with their views directed to these more ancient predictions of the prophet, and also to the more recent declaration of their Master, and with anxious thoughts about his absence, they implored of Him the *sign* of His Coming and of the predicted "consummation" or *end* of the age ;—they would moreover *remember* their Lord's condescending reply to their interesting inquiry about His Return. They would *remember* it as at once an answer direct and satisfactory, equally confirming them in their belief that His Coming would be at the end of the age, and, by furnishing them with intimations the most direct of the time and nature and manner of His Return, dispelling all doubt, if it is possible to suppose the Saviour's language capable of creating dubiety, that in either the one or the other they could have been mistaken;—they would likewise *remember* that on other occasions, and on far less important subjects, He had not suffered them to remain in error when they had misunderstood his meaning, and that if it had been possible for them to question the correctness of their ideas concerning his glorious return, his acquiescence on this occasion would confirm their hopes;—they would *remember* too, that his whole language could only convey the idea of a personal return, when, as the Son of man, he should be seen of all the tribes or kindreds of the earth, "coming in a cloud,"—the very manner of his return they would also *remember*, announced by the angel attendant on his ascension. Such must have been the result of

that work of the blessed Spirit *in bringing to their Remembrance all things which Christ himself had told them.* It enabled them to remember distinctly the prediction He had delivered, with all the circumstances which gave it illustration, rather than suggested unto them new ideas which could not have been deduced from that combination.

By the evangelists these things were not only all brought to remembrance, but they were also *put on record* for the information of the church in all ages. And we have, in their case, the clearest evidence that the receiving of the Holy Ghost did not change their ideas of the significance of the language of their Lord, or their views of the nature of his return. Their Gospels were written after the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit were made, yet in the record of Christ's prediction they have given no intimation whatever, nor left any thing from which it could be inferred, that they *ever* had any other opinion than that the Saviour foretold his real personal return, or that he was to be understood in any other than the natural sense of his words. The same important truth is evident from the testimony of the apostle James, called by Paul "the Lord's brother," and in Jerusalem surnamed The Just. When urged to impugn the cause of his blessed Master before the people, he on the contrary made honourable confession, exclaiming, "*Why do ye inquire of me concerning Jesus, the Son of man?* He sits in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, *and WILL COME in the clouds of heaven;*" and for this he immediately after received the crown of martyrdom.—*Eusebius' Eccles. Hist.* Book 2d. chap. 23, or *History of the Church of Christ*, published by the London Tract Society, vol. I. p. 68. The receiving of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost did not, therefore, change this apostle's idea, that Christ had foretold his personal return as in the clouds of heaven, since this attestation to its truth was 24 years after the ascension of Christ. The same truth was also attested at a still later date by John, another of the Apostles, and one deeply interested in the matter, being one of the four who immediately put the question to the Saviour concerning His Coming,—if indeed the Lord's brother was not that James who also was of the inquiring four. Even *after the destruction of Jerusalem*, did John prophetically exclaim, "*Behold He*

cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Rev. i. 7. But there is evidence that not only the apostles, but the whole primitive church did regard our Lord's prediction of His "Coming in the clouds of heaven," as his Second and glorious coming. I have already referred to the use which Gibbon has attempted to make of the prediction; but having vindicated our Lord from the opinion of his having fixed that coming to be before the then living generation had ceased to exist, I now avail myself of the universal belief of the church concerning this prediction, to prove that if the apostles had been wrong in regarding it as Christ's personal return, their views cannot have been corrected at the day of Pentecost, since that still continued to be the belief of the church. Nor was it a mere barren speculation; but, on the testimony of the Infidel himself, a doctrine "productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians." And in point of fact, however much Christians may have erred in their minute exposition of our Lord's prediction, "the church," as Mede remarks, "hath always grounded her faith of the *Second Coming* of Christ, upon those passages in the Gospels which speak of *his coming in the clouds of heaven*."

Even yet, I believe that there are thousands in the church who never doubt for a moment, that in this important prediction delivered by our Lord, He declares His personal return, and who derive from it their knowledge of the circumstances by which it will be attended, who have never observed *the time* at which that Coming is placed. This was long the case with,

Reverend Sir,

Yours in love sincere, &c.

LETTER VIII.

THAT OUR LORD IN HIS PREDICTION REFERRED TO HIS PERSONAL RETURN, PROVED FROM THE LANGUAGE EMPLOYED AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES FORETOLD.

REVEREND SIR,

In all your Expositions of our Lord's prediction concerning his coming with the clouds of heaven, it

was assumed that there are a variety of Comings of the Son of man. Here you said it is applied to the destruction of Jerusalem—that it is sometimes applied to the destruction of Antichristian nations—to His final Coming,—and to the day of death. This enumeration I regard as utterly unsupported by proof, and it is an unwarrantable assumption in argument to assert that here it *is* the destruction of Jerusalem, and then adduce this as a fact which proves the *variety* you maintain. But multiply as you may the *comings of the Lord*, still you will not deny that there is *one* coming which is of transcendent importance to the Christian; and which, if in any case particularized, may with greater propriety than in the mere infliction of judgment be called emphatically "*THE coming of the Lord.*" Now if this be the case, it is no small presumption in favour of the view already offered, and now maintained, that our Lord in his illustrations of his coming in the clouds of heaven repeatedly gives unto it this emphatic character of "*the coming of the Son of man.*" Mat. xxiv. 27, 37, 39. If there were really a variety of comings, similar in character, and equal in importance, we cannot suppose that in speaking of any one of these, while there was yet one peculiar in every respect, and vastly more important than all the others, the Saviour should speak of any one of these subordinate comings in this emphatic language of *the coming*. If amidst a variety of comings such language might be used concerning the one of vastly greatest importance and of peculiar characteristics, in speaking of any one of the others it would be necessary to use the less definite language of "*a coming,*" or concerning the one more particularly specified to say "*this coming*" or "*that coming.*"

I however go farther and say, that the use of the definite article seems altogether to set aside the idea of there being a variety of comings. It intimates such a *singleness* of event as to render specification unnecessary. To use this form of speech, in referring to *one* particular event from among a class of similar events would be altogether improper, since it would convey an idea of definiteness regarding an object wholly indefinite. "*The coming of the Son of man,*" I therefore consider as in itself an evidence that our Lord was speaking of *the only event* which could be so called, even his personal return.

The same argument may with equal propriety be deduced from the form in which the question was put by the disciples. They do not assume—they do not seem at all to have supposed—that there would be a variety of comings of their Master, for they do not prefer a request that they may obtain the sign of his first, or second, or twentieth coming. Instead of putting their question in a form to distinguish some particular coming, they simply ask, “What shall be the sign of *thy* coming and of the end of the age?” Nor does our Lord remind them that since there are a number of Comings it is necessary that they be more specific in their question. He does not interrogate them as to the particular coming they mean—whether that at death? or that at the destruction of Jerusalem? or that at the overthrow of the Antichristian Apostasy? or that at the termination of this mundane system? or that at whatever other time men may have been pleased to fancy or invent a coming. The disciples, by the very nature of their question, assume that from the time at which they spoke there would be only *one* coming of Christ, an idea which the Saviour’s answer amply confirms.

But even the *character* in which our Lord predicts his coming in the clouds of heaven, of itself necessarily implies his personal presence. It is the Coming of “*The Son of man.*” Is this term at all applicable to Him except as having the *human nature* in union with his divine? A comparison of the passages in which the term occurs, and where it has no reference to his coming, would probably be of service to you in determining the meaning of those which are disputed. A near and beloved relative in his regular course of reading through the Greek New Testament, in the way of comparison for his own satisfaction, marked down every instance in which this term is used extending also the connection in which it occurs. This list he has put into my hands, but the number of these passages, (82,) prevents their quotation; still for the sake of those who desire due investigation, I subjoin the references. Except in one case in the Acts, and another in the book of the Revelation, the term is confined to the Gospels, never being used but by the Saviour himself. If, however, we may form a judgment of the meaning of those relating to his coming, by the nature of those which do not, then I must

say that in every instance, except one which Griesbach in his "Various Readings" says is omitted in some MSS., "the Son of man" is absolutely restricted to the actings of the Son of God as clothed with the nature of Man; never being applied to the operations of the Holy Spirit, nor to God's execution of judgment on wicked nations, nor in any case in which there is not the palpable presence of Him who was made in the likeness of men.* You yourself, indeed, when discoursing on the 31st verse of the following chapter, actually drew an argument for its being the Son of God *in human nature*, that is *there* spoken of, when He "shall come in His glory," and surely if your argument, from the mere use of this term, be worth any thing in Mat. xxv. its value should not be greatly less when used by me concerning Mat. xxiv. It is admitted by all, that He will yet come in that nature in which alone he is the Son of man, and it should be some very strong reason which would occasion any doubt that the Saviour referred to His return in that character when he spake of His Coming as the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. It is not the execution of his purposes through human agency that will be a coming of the Son of man, but a real corporeal presence visible to the eyes of men, and actually to be seen by them.

The distinction between his coming and the presence of the Roman army is made perfectly obvious by the Saviour himself. The one is "*the abomination of desolation*," the other is "*the Son of man*." How different are the terms employed by the Saviour to designate the two! In the one case they are the language of endearment, in the other they excite indignation, and convey the expression of reprobation. The approach of the Romans was the prelude

* The term "The Son of man," occurs in Mat. viii. 20..ix. 6..x. 23..xi. 19..xii. 8, 32, 40..xiii. 37, 41..xvi. 13, 27, 28..xvii. 9, 12, 22..xviii. 11..xix. 28..xx. 18, 28..xxiv. 27, 30, (*twice,*) 37, 39, 44..xxv. 13, 31..xxvi. 2, 24, 45, 64.

Mark ii. 10, 28..viii. 31, 38..ix. 9, 12, 31..x. 33, 45..xiii. 26..xiv. 21, 41, 62.

Luke v. 24..vi. 5, 22..vii. 34..ix. 22, 26, 44, 56, 58..xi. 30..xii. 8, 10, 40..xvii. 22, 24, 26, 30..xviii. 8..xix. 10..xxi. 27, 36..xxii. 22, 48, 69..xxiv. 7.

John i. 51..iii. 13, 14..v. 27—vi. 27, 53, 62..viii. 28..xii. 23, 34..xiii. 31. Acts vii. 56. Rev. xiv. 14.

to their being “*led away captive* into all nations;” on the contrary, the signs of the Coming of the Son of man will intimate that “*their redemption draweth nigh.*” When the time of the destruction of Jerusalem arrived, believers were to “*flee into the mountains;*” when the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, “He shall send *His angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and *they shall gather together his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Is it then *his own coming*, think you, that the Saviour calls an “abomination”? He who is worthy of all admiration in heaven and in earth, who claims and receives the homage of the highest of created intelligences to represent himself as an *abomination!* No, no. The work of destruction was indeed in execution of the righteous purposes of the Most High, but there is surely a wide distinction between the instrument and Him whose designs they execute. These instruments are often the guiltiest of men, and the very acts by which God’s holiness may be most conspicuously vindicated and his wrath against sin most eminently displayed, may be the most aggravated guilt of those instruments by whom it is immediately inflicted. In the very case of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Romans are therefore called “the abomination of desolation,” but never would Christ call his own coming an abomination—that coming which will be in “great glory.”

Those to whom the Saviour spake could easily recognise an enemy to their nation in this “abomination of desolation;” but this they certainly did not in the Coming of the Son of man. With them, this was evidently an object of great desire. The very danger of their deception indeed lay in the eager desire they had for his return. On false representations *they would be ready to go forth to seek him.* They therefore needed to be warned of the hazard to which they were exposed on this ground. “Wherefore,” says the Saviour, “if they say unto you, behold He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not.” So eager would they be for the Coming of the Son of man, that false pretenders would find it easy to deceive many, and that without special warning all would be in danger. Was it of “the abomination of desolation,” the enemy they hated, they could be mistaken in the heat of their zeal for his “coming”? or

was it of the real, true, and personal coming of the Son of man as their glorious Messiah?

But this warning against "*false Christs*" is in its very nature utterly irreconcilable with any other idea than that the coming which they expected, and desired, and inquired about, and which Jesus described, was his Personal Return. When he would guard them against the danger of mistake, it is not by telling them that there will be no personal manifestation of himself, but a mere display of his power and his wrath, by the agency of the Romans. The ground of caution is very different, and applicable only to a personal coming. It is, that the promised manifestation will be altogether inimitable by imposters, for it will be no secret, but a bright visible appearance, "as the lightning."*

But not only does the term "Son of man" necessarily imply his personal presence, while there is also a clear distinction drawn between his coming and the destruction of

* It has been well said by Mr. Cunningham, that "there is no end to the vagaries of Commentators." To a person desirous of really ascertaining the meaning of the Scriptures, there can be few things more annoying than the "vagaries" which are offered as explanations in approved Commentaries. A striking instance of this occurs in Henry on this comparison of our Lord's coming to *the lightning*, which he says "seems primarily to be meant of His coming to set up his spiritual kingdom in the world: where the gospel came in its light and power, there the Son of man came, "as the lightning"!! So the gospel came not any where in its light and power till the destruction of Jerusalem; not even to the thousands of Jews who believed long previously, in that city itself. (Acts xxi. 20.) Transcendantly important has that event become by "the vagaries of Commentators," in other respects than in the sufferings which it occasioned.

The same explanation is extended to the following verse, "for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," being also understood of the successful preaching of the gospel, which it is said "*gathered in multitudes*, not by external compulsion, but as it were by such a natural instinct and inclination as brings the birds of prey to their preys"!! Notwithstanding of this explanation, however, since "some understand these verses of the Coming of the Son of man, *to destroy Jerusalem*," the author, in the most accommodating manner, proceeds to show that these things were "intimated concerning it" also. And after all this, he yet says, "it is *very applicable* to the day of judgment, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in that day, and our gathering together unto him." Can we wonder that the vagaries of Commentators should have induced the discerning infidel to regard the Scriptures, so treated, as a nose of wax, to be moulded and fashioned at pleasure?

Jerusalem ; but the minuteness with which the intimations concerning the latter were *literally fulfilled*, presents a strong argument that in a similar manner, at the appointed time, will all the tribes of the earth “*see* the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” The very fact of the events of a certain character having received their fulfilment in the proper sense of the words used in the prediction, is certainly a warrant for the expectation that the other will be so also. Now Jerusalem was to be “*compassed with armies;*” (Luke xxi. 20,) and was not this the very method adopted by Titus to reduce the city ? When this took place the disciples were to “*know that the desolation thereof is nigh,*” and the event soon verified the accuracy of the prediction. “*Then let them which are in Judea, flee to the mountains,*” said the Saviour, “*and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.*” This is a case which, if in any, it might certainly have been expected was not meant to be understood to the letter of the statement. It might have been thought and said, that if Jerusalem was really to be *compassed* with armies, that the proper time of escape instead of being “*then,*” when it had been so compassed, should have been *before* it. But the circumstances fully vindicate the minuteness of the prophecy, and testify how very literally it has been fulfilled, in so far as hitherto accomplished. For when the city was compassed by the Roman army under Cestius, in the 68th year of our Lord, when, as appears from all testimony, it might easily have been taken, he suddenly “*retired from the city,*” as Josephus narrates, “*without any reason in the world;*” and thus gave the Jewish disciples an opportunity of obeying their Lord’s command, and effecting their escape. They had been enjoined to flee *to the mountains*, and accordingly they fled principally to Pella, a town situated in the mountains of Perea, beyond Jordan, where they were allowed to remain for the time in safety.

Our Lord declared concerning the temple, that not one stone of it should be left upon another that should not be thrown down. Luke xxi. 6. And this also was accom-

plished in the minutest manner, when Titus ordered his soldiers to dig up the foundations both of the city and temple, orders which they obeyed with alacrity, in expectation of much treasure; and the foundations were afterwards turned up entirely *with a ploughshare*, by order of Turnus Rufus, who was left to command the army.

The Jews were to be led captive into all nations; and their present dispersion continues to testify to the literal fulfilment of the Saviour's prophecy. Their capital was also to be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and frequently as for seventeen centuries it has changed masters, it has invariably been in the hands of Gentiles, and has almost invariably been trodden down, or kept in degradation and in thraldom by them. The disciples themselves were to endure much *persecution*, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem. Let the history of the church bear witness whether this was literally or figuratively accomplished. And let the same record be searched, in order to ascertain the nature of his language in the prediction of false Christs, by the kind of accomplishment it has received.

In all of these particulars, that our Lord's language is to be understood in its plain and obvious sense, is perfectly evident; and indeed the supposition of our Lord's prediction concerning his coming in the clouds of heaven being merely figurative, is a supposition entirely at variance with the whole tenor of his ordinary discourse. *Parable* was with him a very common mode of instruction, but the use of figurative language, at least figures elaborately carried out to their utmost length, is exceedingly rare with him,—even if it could at all be proved that there was any thing *like a figure* in this prediction of his coming in the clouds of heaven.

But if, as I have formerly shown, our Lord had already predicted the destruction of Jerusalem in the plainest language,—in a way which it was impossible could be misunderstood,—what plausible reason can be devised for supposing that he afterwards, under promise of the coming of the Son of man, merely tells the same thing, even though it be called language of a figurative nature? No figurative language could render more intelligible the awful fate which awaited Jerusalem and the House of the Lord, than that

he had already uttered ; while, to suppose that what Christ afterwards said concerning his own coming was also applied to that event, involves the whole in inextricable confusion. He had, very shortly before, informed them that their House was left unto them “desolate,”—He had afterwards assured them that “there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down,”—He had warned them that they should “hear of wars and rumours of wars,” and that they should “see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the Holy place,”—and he had informed them that they might, when they saw “Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh;”—All these plain and distinct intimations concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, he had given previous to his speaking at all of his “coming in the clouds of heaven.” And can we suppose that such a prediction as that of his coming with all the attendant circumstances, was meant merely to elucidate or illustrate those concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, already declared with so much plainness? If applied to the same event, the only possible effect they could produce would be to render it obscure and confused ; and this just has been the effect of all interpretations of that nature. But nowhere has Christ confounded the two. He has on the contrary kept them perfectly distinct ; and this, the slightest examination, in the way of comparison between the very circumstances predicted and the nature of Antimillenarian Expositions, will amply demonstrate.

Observe then that our Lord expressly says that when the *sign* of the Son of man has appeared in heaven, “then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see the Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven.” The tribes of the earth, you say, are the tribes of the Jews, who, you farther say, *did see* the Son of man coming at the destruction of Jerusalem. Now observe how directly opposed this is to the express statement of the Saviour himself to the Jews, just before he left the Temple, “I say unto you, *Ye shall NOT see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;*” that is, that He would *not be seen of them*, in whatever sense you are pleased to understand it—and the argument will admit of my allowing you to choose your particular application—he

would *not* be seen of them till their conversion. No vision of him did they enjoy, either personal or gracious, at the destruction of Jerusalem; and therefore to assert that it was of that event the Saviour spake, when he said he should *be seen* coming in the clouds of heaven, is to set prophecy against prophecy, or Christ against himself.

Again, when the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, “He shall *send his angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall *gather together his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” This you also refer to events at the destruction of Jerusalem, with what consistency, let me again inquire. The “angels,” you say, are *the ministers of the gospel*, and the *gathered elect* are *those converted to the faith* through their instrumentality. And would this be a *gathering of the elect “TOGETHER”?* and if so, would it be then so very extensive as to be from “the one end of heaven to the other?” But farther, was it only *at the destruction of Jerusalem* that the ministers of the gospel *were sent on their mission of mercy*? Had they not long before engaged in their work? had not eleven of the apostles finished their labours before that time? The 14th verse of this very chapter, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in *all the world* for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come,” you asserted to have been fulfilled *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, before *the end* of the Jewish polity. How then can the angels sent out at the coming of the Lord, and that “*after* the tribulation” which you regard as the destruction of Jerusalem, have been the preachers of the gospel sent forth only at that time? They would thus be made to have *accomplished* their work before it was begun. Mr. Faber, though he places the Coming of the Son of man immediately before the Millennium, still regards it as a figurative Coming, and therefore gives the same interpretation of the mission and work of the angels. This exposition is, however, not less inconsistent with his ideas of other parts of the prediction than I have already shown it to be with yours. For he understands “*the end*” *before which* our Lord declares the gospel will be preached in all the world to be at the close of the times of the Gentiles. Now, as Mr. Faber places his figurative Coming of the

Son of man *after* these times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, how does the Son of man only *send forth* his angels *at* his Coming *after* these times, if this meant the preachers of the gospel offering salvation *before* their accomplishment? It is only *when* He shall come, that the angels are sent forth; then only do they receive their commission to gather the elect. This, therefore, is something that is to take place, not before, but after the Coming of Christ, and can in no way accord with the idea of its being a preaching of the gospel which is *to be begun*—nay, which is to be completely *accomplished*—before those times be fulfilled which *precede* the coming of the Lord.

Observe also, that as it is *the same* Son of man who is to come in the clouds of heaven, that is to send forth his angels to gather together his elect, it necessarily follows that if that Coming was the coming of the Romans, so also must it be this avenging and desolating people who, at the very destruction of Jerusalem, were to send forth the angels to gather the elect, or, as you expound it, the ministers to preach the gospel. Was it then the Romans by whom these preachers were missioned to proclaim the name of Jesus? The very opposite was the fact; and, as it was indeed expressly foretold by our Lord in this very prediction, they persecuted to the death those commissioned by his church.

Again, the destruction of Jerusalem, you say, was itself “the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven.” You also assert, however, that the “greatest tribulation that ever was or shall be,” was likewise that at the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, these interpretations are mutually destructive; for our Lord expressly informs us that *His coming* is *not* this great tribulation. I have already shown, as maintained by Mr. Faber, that this tribulation, instead of being at the destruction of Jerusalem, is at the close of the times of the Gentiles; but if you had been correct in asserting that this great tribulation was the destruction of Jerusalem, you would necessarily destroy your other assertion—for the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven is “immediately *after*” that tribulation.

But the coming of the Son of man is to be *preceded* by certain “signs in the sun, moon, and stars,” &c.; these signs are still more “immediately *after*” the great tribu-

lation; consequently neither are *they* to be confounded with it. Yet you do confound these "signs," not only with the "tribulation," which in the prophecy they are thus made to *succeed*, but you also confound them with *the coming* itself, which they really *precede*. The signs you symbolize to mean the overthrow of the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical; but if they *precede* the coming of the Lord, and if that coming be the destruction of Jerusalem, and if both be the great tribulation, there is an utter and entire confusion of the *sign* with that which it announces, and of the event itself with what is to take place "after" it. Evidently feeling involved in this dilemma, you again said the Coming of the Son of man was his coming in the establishment of his *spiritual kingdom*. The spiritual kingdom had been established, however, long *before* the destruction of Jerusalem; it had made large progress, indeed; you yourself said the gospel had been preached in all the world before it; and how then could the coming of the Son of man, if after the destruction of Jerusalem, be the establishment of the spiritual kingdom? Besides, His coming is *in the clouds of heaven*; and how this will accord with its being in the establishment of *the spiritual Kingdom*, it is difficult to perceive,—nor is the difficulty lessened, but increased, when we observe that "all the tribes of the earth *shall mourn*" when they witness His coming. The supposition, moreover, is in complete oversight of your having already converted *the angels* into the preachers of the gospel, for the very purpose of establishing the spiritual Kingdom, whose mission is not to be confounded with the coming of the Son of man, *by whom* they are sent out.

These various circumstances demonstrate your exposition of our Lord's prediction of his coming to be altogether erroneous, and therefore confirm much the view already given of that being his real, proper, personal return, at the close of the times of the Gentiles and restoration of Israel. Mr. Faber, as I have frequently noticed, places this coming of the Son of man immediately before the Millennium. *The time* to which the prophecy refers, he has endeavoured with much care to ascertain; although his views of the *nature* of Christ's coming have led him into various singular inconsistencies. Little of that critical acumen which so strongly

marks some of his prophetical investigations has been displayed in the interpretation of the most important parts of this prediction. He seems indeed to have entirely overlooked the circumstances which occasioned the prediction, and the most marked and obvious distinctions which it presents. He readily perceives, however, the impression which must be produced upon the mind of the unprejudiced, or, as he is pleased to say, the "*careless reader*," by the nature of the language in which the prophecy is couched, and by the connection of the circumstances foretold.

"This epoch," he says, of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, "This epoch is not identical with the epoch of the *literal* day of judgment: for although the poetical imagery of that *figurative* judgment-day is *borrowed* from the awful realities of the literal judgment-day, and although such a circumstance *may easily mislead a careless reader* to confound the one day with the other day; yet we shall always find some chronological mark or circumstance associated with the former, which will clearly and effectually distinguish it from the latter." *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 221. It will only be "a careless reader," and not a careful student of our Lord's prediction, whose attention is thus to be diverted from its obvious meaning and design. How easily Mr. Faber, by the gratuitous assumption of a different chronology for our Lord's return, disposes of all the circumstances in which it originated; of the nature of the questions put by the disciples; and of the numerous minute details in the prediction, which it would require all the extent of his ingenuity, if "*borrowed*," to restore to their rightful owner. But if the sublime language so magnificently descriptive of the Coming of the Son of man, instead of referring to his personal return, be merely borrowed from some one descriptive of the real event, it will be difficult, I fear, to find that account of "the awful realities" of his coming from which it is so borrowed. Is there a *single passage*, which is not clearly referable *by its chronology* to the very same period, that is equally full, sublime, or circumstantial? There is not one. In different passages, as we shall afterwards find, indisputably referring to the personal coming of Christ, the same circumstances are introduced, but these are in detail.

The particulars which are here enumerated in combination, though they may all be found in other passages, are contained in no other single prediction. Instead, therefore, of this description being "borrowed" from some other prediction, other passages evidently refer to this description of the Coming of the Son of man and its various concomitants. Had there even been nothing in the circumstances in which it originated, or in the views and questions of those to whose inquiry it is professedly a reply, the statements here contained plainly forbid any one to assume that it is merely the adornings of a picture with borrowed scenery, and not rather "the awful realities" of his glorious coming of which the Son of man thus speaks.

Indeed, Mr. Faber himself seems sometimes to admit, that his notion is really destitute of Scriptural *proof*. Speaking of the celestial signs here predicted, he says they are "*images all borrowed from the EXPECTED occurrences attendant upon the literal day of judgment.*" *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 250. It is therefore, in his own estimation, not a truth which may be *proved*, but something which is only "*expected*," that such signs will precede the literal coming of Christ; and yet our Lord's sublime description of these signs, as preceding his Coming, is declared to be "*borrowed*," without question, from these "*expected occurrences*!" We have thus the singular logical inconsistency of an unqualified assertion of the most magnificent description of certain events being *absolutely borrowed* from other events which are only *expected* to occur!! If the reality be matter only of probability or peradventure, where is the ground of assurance that any thing *can* be *borrowed* from it?

But however insecure such a foundation may be for faith to rest upon, in a matter of the greatest importance, those who deny that such passages as this refer to the proper coming of Christ, deprive themselves of all *evidence* by which it can be established; and thus render it necessary to lower down the certain assurance derived from God's word into an unsupported *expectation*. But even after having thus despoiled our Lord's prediction of its literal meaning, Mr. Faber can still speak of "*the literal Second Advent of Christ with the clouds of heaven,*" as if he were nevertheless at liberty to assume that his coming will be in the very manner here described. *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 226.

It is indeed perfectly evident, that if *the manner* of Christ's coming is not declared in this prediction, it must still remain a matter of uncertainty; and Mr. Faber is bound to return to his former proposition, and to replace the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven in his list of "*expected occurrences.*" Yet after all he has said of "borrowed" scenery and a "figurative coming," we have already seen, in a preceding Letter, that Mr. Faber could not fully reconcile his own mind to the idea of this sublime prediction being entirely so, and found it necessary to take shelter in the notion, "that His final coming at the literal day of judgment is also *not obscurely* alluded to." But it is not a little remarkable that while he has often argued strongly, in some instances I might say pertinaciously, *from the very words* of Scripture prophecy, he should here set aside the whole tenor of the Saviour's discourse, so as to find nothing like evidence in the clearest language that could possibly be employed.

But this argument may yet be put in another form to advantage, in considering the nature of our Lord's prediction. You yourself admit that the Lord Jesus will *at some time* return in person—you will farther admit (take your evidence from what source you may,) that his Coming will then be with the clouds of heaven—you do not question that, when he so comes, all his elect will be gathered from the earth, at the sound of the archangel's trumpet—now, with these admissions, connect a supposition that our Lord on the present occasion had truly *desired* to communicate to his disciples, who contemplated with sorrow his departure, an account of his real return—making for a moment such a supposition of the Saviour's design of informing his disciples of these events, tell me, whether language more appropriate, direct, and perspicuous, could possibly have been selected for the purpose; or what circumstances would warrant more the idea of its being his personal advent, of which the Saviour at any time spake? But if the language was so fitted to convey such an impression; and if these ideas be those which connect themselves with the personal return of Christ, then not only would the disciples have been most completely deceived, unless it was of that coming of which He spake; but every reader of the narrative would have been exposed to the same hazard.

Scott indeed confesses, that "*the language* of these verses is *suited*, and probably *was intended*, to lead the mind of the reader to the consideration of the end of the world *and the coming of Christ* to judgment; yet," he nevertheless asserts, "the clause 'immediately after the tribulation of those days,' restricts the *primary* sense of them to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events which were consequent to it." That the coming of the Son of man is not restricted by that clause to the destruction of Jerusalem but to the great tribulation at the close of the times of the Gentiles, I have often shown; but whatever restriction that clause puts upon the time of the coming of the Son of man to it we are bound to adhere. If our Lord restrict the sense in which his prediction is to be understood, it certainly becomes not his people, without his authority, to extend it. Yet this eminent commentator hesitates not to assert, that "*the whole* passage will have *a more literal, and far more august accomplishment*, at the day of judgment."

"Ere long," says he, in his reflections on this part of the prediction, "the expected end shall come: then 'the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven,' and nature shall seem to expire in convulsions. The tokens of the Saviour's coming will be perceived. *He will come with divine power and glory in the clouds of heaven;* and 'all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him' whom now they despise and disobey. But before He executes his righteous vengeance on his enemies, He will employ his holy 'angels to gather his elect' from every part of the earth, as with the sound of a mighty trumpet, that they may 'be for ever with the Lord.'" But notwithstanding of this correct exhibition of the fulfilment of the prediction, he immediately neutralizes all *the effect* of our Lord's following exhortations to *watchfulness*, so forcibly inculcated both by direct precept and parabolic illustration. Scott thus continues after the quotation just made: "It is not for us 'to know the times and seasons' of this grand event; but we may easily perceive the tokens of *our own approaching dissolution*.' Under the guise of a retiring modesty, which fears the charge of presumption, *the signs* which our Lord gives of *his coming*, and attention to which he urges for the ex-

press purpose of ascertaining the time, are thus supplanted by the tokens of our own approaching dissolution, which, (to prove *our ignorance* of the times and seasons, I suppose,) it is assumed as infallibly *certain* will take place *before* the coming of the Lord. Mark now the perfect contrast between the inference drawn by the Saviour from this *our ignorance* of the time of his return, with that deduced from it by his Commentator; "WATCH, therefore," is the injunction of Jesus, "*FOR ye know not at what hour YOUR LORD doth come.*" Henry himself, while he states the views of those "who think this is to be understood only of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jewish nation," yet acknowledges that "it seems rather to refer to Christ's Second Coming," and asks "What need we put *such strained constructions* as some do upon these verses, which speak of it *so clearly* and *so agreeably to other Scriptures*, especially," he very well adds, "when Christ is here answering an inquiry concerning his coming at the end of the world, [or age,] *which Christ was never shy of speaking of to his disciples?*"

Its agreeableness to other Scriptures which do confessedly refer to the personal return of Christ is a matter of vast importance, and this correspondence we will find to hold in every particular. I say nothing at present of Daniel's placing the resurrection of "many of them who sleep in the dust of the earth" immediately after the great tribulation, (Dan. xii. 1, 2,) since I know not what acknowledgment you would make concerning that prophecy. Neither do I appeal to the evidence of Zechariah, who exhibits the coming of the Lord with all his saints just when the nations have assembled against Jerusalem to battle and the city has been taken, after its repossession by the Restored tribes of Israel. Zech. xiv. 1—5. I rather confine myself entirely to New Testament evidence, and to passages the application of which you will not question. According to our Lord's own prediction, his coming will be "*in the clouds of heaven,*" or "*in a cloud,*" and this corresponds with the annunciation of the angelic attendant on his ascension. While the disciples beheld, "*he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight;*" when to the astonished witnesses it was declared, that "*this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven,*

shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen him go." And, twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, when therefore the apostle could not refer to that event, John still exclaims, "Behold He cometh *with clouds*, and every eye shall *see him*." And as Christ himself said that "all the tribes of the earth *shall mourn*," when they see him coming, so John also adds, "and all kindreds of the earth *shall wail* because of him"—the word "tribes," used by our Lord, being in the original the very word rendered "kindreds," by John.* Acts i. 9—11. Rev. i. 7. Our Lord declares that He will then have a retinue of "angels;" and Paul also testifies of his personal return, that "he shall be revealed from heaven, *with his mighty angels*."

2 Thess. i. 7.

The Son of man shall send his angels "with a great sound of a trumpet;" and Paul again informs us that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and *with the trump of God*;" "the last trump," he again says, "*for the trumpet shall sound.*" 1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 52. When the Son of man comes with his angels, "*they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other;*" and the apostle farther testifies that "*the dead in Christ shall rise first; THEN we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them IN THE CLOUDS, to meet the Lord in the air.*" 1 Thess. iv. 17.

In every particular, therefore, do we find our Lord's statement fully corroborated by those in the epistles, where

* Mr. Faber, in his *General and Connected View of the Prophecies*, has the following remarks on this passage: "These words contain an evident allusion to a prophecy of Zechariah, *relative to the Restoration and Conversion of the Jews.* (Zech. xii. 10.) Like that prediction, they certainly give us reason to believe, that *there will be a visible manifestation of the Lord* at the period when Antichrist is overthrown, *and the Jews are re-settled in their own land.* This awful manifestation St. John afterwards describes at large. (Rev. xiv. 17—20. xix. 11—21.) Here he briefly tells us that all the kindreds of the earth, meaning, I suppose, the great confederacy of the Latin earth or Roman empire, shall wail because of the Messiah; that *every eye shall see him*; and that they also which pierced him, the lately unbelieving but now penitent *Jews* shall look upon him. *Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.*" Vol. II. p. 337. I do not remember that Mr. Faber has taken any notice of this verse in his *Sacred Calender of Prophecy*; but, if he has, I doubt it will be in very different terms.

there cannot be a doubt that the Saviour's personal return is referred to, thus also confirming the interpretation given. The fact of this being the personal return, has, by these very coincidences, compelled the acknowledgment of those who wholly disregard the express statements of the time to which it is fixed. From the questions of the disciples, the circumstances introduced, and the language employed, the Rev. Mr. Mason regards our Lord as here predicting *his personal return*, although by a too close adherence to the word "world" *in our translation*, he places this Coming of Christ *after* the Millennium. "Having informed his disciples of the total desolations which should come on the temple, he forcibly observes; "they were induced to ask him, 'Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy Coming, and of the end of the world?' Mat. xxiv. 3. In the latter question, *the disciples connect CHRIST'S SECOND COMING with the end of the world, [or age,] importing plainly that they had no idea of this advent till the conclusion of time, [or of this dispensation.]* As Christ does not correct this opinion, *we may be assured it was no mistake.* In answer to this part of their request, He says, in verse 30, 'And they shall see the Son of man coming *in the clouds of heaven,* with power and great glory.' " Gentiles' Fulness, p. 198. The single correction of "age" for *world*, which even you would make, and attention to *the time* at which it is expressly fixed by the Saviour himself, but which Mr. Mason has wholly overlooked, this single extract would overthrow many a page its venerable author has written upon the subject. It also testifies strongly to the conviction which forced itself upon his mind, that the Coming of Christ with the clouds of heaven can only apply to His personal return.

Indeed, although most Antimillenarians, in the present day, have become too wary to make such an admission, it does not appear to have been so in former times. Thus Dr. Cressener remarks, as quoted by Mr. Cunningham, "it found *an almost unanimous consent* among all sorts of interpreters, that this coming of the Son of man (Mat. xxiv. 30,) *must be His Second Coming in glory.* Grotius himself in this is forced to be *of the same mind* with the rest." I have already referred to the testimony of the Historian of its having been universally so understood by the prim-

itive church; and, I may now add also by the *collective representatives* of the Church in different ages. The passage is cited in the Creeds and Confessions of different countries *in proof* of Christ's Second Coming, when they have attended little to *the time* at which it is placed by the Saviour himself. The prediction is so cited in the *Geneva Confession of Faith*, in proof that Christ "will come in the same visible form in the which he ascended, with an unspeakable majesty, power, and company." *Collection of Confessions*, p. 6. It is also cited in the *Scots Confession of Faith*, as an encouragement to present duty, by the glories it presents, since "we certainly believe *that the same our Lord Jesus shall as visibly return* as that he was seen to ascend; and then we firmly believe, *that the Time of Refreshing and Restitution of all things shall come*, insomuch that those that from the beginning have suffered violence, injury, and wrong, for righteousness' sake, shall inherit that blessed immortality promised from the beginning;" whence they pledge themselves not to be moved "to renounce and forsake that blessed society which we, the members, have with our head and only Mediator Christ Jesus, whom we confess and avow to be the Messias promised." *Ibid.* p. 22. The compilers of the *Westminster Confession*, also,—one of the most eminent of whom, (Goodwin,) we know to have been a staunch Millenarian,—although they have said nothing *in the Confession itself* of the Millennium, by which their precise views concerning it can be ascertained, appear evidently to have regarded it as *preceded by the Coming of Christ*. They have had no idea of 1000 years as certainly to intervene, for they cite our Lord's prediction to prove the personal return of the Redeemer as *sudden and unexpected*; and that Christ will have the day of judgment "*unknown to men*, that they may shake off all carnal security, and *be always watchful*, because they *know not at what hour* the Lord will come; and may ever be prepared to say, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.'" *Ibid.* p. 274, or *common edition*, p. 174. They again cite this prediction in their *Larger Catechism*, (Quest. 56,) in proof that Christ shall personally "come again at the last day, in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of His Father's, with all his holy angels."

These are clear and unequivocal testimonies as to the

ideas attached by their authors to *the Coming of the Son of man* in the clouds of heaven, being no figurative advent. Far be it from me, however, to ask of you submission to the authority of men, or to bend your judgment before that even of the most eminent in the church,—not although they may have been employed in the compilation of Catechisms and Confessions. But if you can come to the word of God itself as unfettered as they appear to have done, bringing with you Reason for the *right interpretation* of Revelation, I am not without hope, that in the evidence previously adduced, and in the arguments formerly advanced, you may perceive grounds for acquiescing in their decision with respect to the nature of the coming of the Son of man. Should this be the result of our present investigation, it will afford me much pleasure, and be additional cause of gratitude to Him who has already honoured much,

Reverend Sir,

Yours in the Lord Jesus, &c.

LETTER IX.

THAT THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN WILL BE PERSONAL, PROVED FROM THE VARIOUS PARABLES GIVEN IN ILLUSTRATION OF THE PREDICTION.

REVEREND SIR,

The Parables continued in our Lord's Prophetic Discourse supply, in my opinion, additional and important evidence in favour of the interpretation formerly given. They have proved another source of serious difficulty to all Antimillenarian Expositors, who, while they readily admit the proper application of one or more, according to their several fancies or caprice, strenuously resist every attempt to extend to all the same application to the personal return of Christ, as declared to be the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. While almost all of them agree in maintaining, that the Saviour, from speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem as the coming of the Son of man, proceeds *somewhere* in his discourse to speak of his real return—there is yet an utter want of harmony in de-

termining at what particular point he ceases to refer to the one and begins to predict the other. One admits that all the parables are meant as illustrations of His Second Coming, while others suppose that only a part are to be so understood; and of those who do so, scarcely two agree as to where the division is to be made, nor afterwards adhere with consistency to the distinction they themselves have drawn.

This confusion may, I think, be easily traced to the same fertile cause of inconsistency already so often alluded to—the refusal to recognise the real nature of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, when He shall send his angels to gather together his elect from the one end of heaven to the other. It is only by the acknowledgment you are so willing to make concerning that coming, that a consistent view of these parables can ever be obtained, for it is *in illustration of that coming* they were all spoken, and with regard to nothing else will they all harmonise. They were not delivered on different occasions, and for different purposes. There is no intimation given of their being *partly* in illustration of a *figurative* coming, and *partly* in illustration of one that is *personal*. They were all uttered at one time, and for one specific purpose—the illustration of the prediction just before delivered concerning *the* coming of the Son of man. With it they stand intimately connected; and they are inseparably related, each to the other, as the several parts of one great whole. The Coming of Christ in glory is in itself an important event, and in the eyes of the disciples, to whose inquiries our Lord's prediction was delivered as a reply, one of deepest interest; and circumstantial as was the prediction itself, Jesus added seven distinct illustrations in this parabolic form, all to exhibit the state of the church and the world in relation to his return. Several of the parables are recorded fully by Matthew only; but by him some of them are narrated at considerable length—the 25th chapter being entirely occupied by the account of three. In all of them, observation of the progress of events in the fulfilment of the numerous signs Jesus had given is enjoined.

The duty of watching for his coming in the clouds of heaven is first inculcated by the parable of the fig-tree. Mat. xxiv. 32, 33. The state of the world at the time of

his coming, in their infidel disregard of all the signs of its approach, and their contempt for the warnings of his word, is next compared to that of the antediluvians, whose fate is also set forth as the example of what shall again befall a rebellious world. ver. 36—41. This is followed by a comparison of his coming to that of a “thief” in its unexpectedness to those whom its awful realities will surprise. There is next an especial admonition to watchfulness and fidelity, on the part of ministers of the gospel, contained in the parable of the “faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made ruler over his household” in his absence, and an exhibition of the consequences which will ensue to others awfully unfaithful, who, in the depth of their infidelity regarding the coming of the Lord, will act a cruel and unjust part towards their brethren in the ministry. ver. 42—51. The state of the church generally, as it respects *the expectation* of this coming of her Lord, is next set before us in the parable of the Bridegroom and the marriage. Mat. xxv. 1—13. The duty of a careful occupation and diligent use of the talents with which Christians are endowed, and the several rewards to be bestowed according to the improvement made by them respectively, is then illustrated by the distribution of various sums by the nobleman to his servants, prior to his taking a long journey, and his reckoning with them at his return. ver. 14—30. And, lastly, the termination of the Gentile dispensation, and the judgment of Jesus upon the quick at his return, bestowing rewards upon his people and inflicting punishment upon his enemies, are displayed by the illustration of the sheep and the goats. ver. 31—46.

All of these, it is to be observed, form one series, and are all meant to serve one important purpose—the more full elucidation of the prediction of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. They follow each other in regular and unbroken succession, having ever interwoven into their composition the particular references which they severally possess to the great event to which they relate. The parable of the fig-tree follows in the very next verse, the mission of the angels to gather together the elect, and the object of it is declared to be that when the preceding signs are accomplished, it may be known that the Son of man “*is near even at the doors.*” But as the precise time of his coming

was left unknown, the case of the antediluvians and their unexpected destruction in the midst of their wickedness, is set forth, when its relation to the Saviour's return is once more distinctly intimated by its being twice again expressly declared, "so shall also the *coming of the Son of man* be." ver. 37, 39. The same relation is farther repeatedly introduced in the illustrations both of the thief and the steward. The inferences in the former case are, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not at what hour *your Lord doth come*;" and "therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, *the Son of man cometh*." ver. 42, 44. In the case of the steward, or ruler over the household, a blessing is pronounced on him who continues faithful to his trust, and "whom *his Lord, when he cometh*, shall find so doing;" and it is when the "evil servant shall say in his heart, *My Lord delayeth his Coming*," that he begins to exercise cruelty towards his fellow-servants, when "the Lord of that servant *shall come* in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Again when the Kingdom of heaven, or the Church, is likened unto ten virgins, it is "while the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept;" and the admonition from this is, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour *wherein the Son of man cometh*." Farther, in the case of the man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods," the lesson taught still is, that "after a long time *the Lord of those servants cometh*, and reckoneth with them." And, finally, the separation of the sheep from the goats is "*when the Son of shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.*"

Nothing can be more obvious than the perfect unity of design which runs through the whole. How various soever the circumstances stated may be, still they all centre and terminate in the one great event of the coming of the Son of man. Looking at them in their natural and regular connection, a person ignorant of the present state of the case might naturally suppose that nothing but the greatest perversity could have induced any individual to attempt a separation of the one from the other, or of any or all from that coming to which they are so indissolubly united. Yet not only has this been done, but is done by every Antimillenarian Expositor. It is essential to the very being of

his interpretation of *a figurative coming* of the Son of man in the destruction of Jerusalem, that this coming be disjoined from his real proper coming whenever it may occur. And as there is at least *one* of these illustrations which all Antimillenarians apply to Christ's personal return, and several others of which the majority make a similar application, that disjunction must be effected at whatever expense of consistency and propriety. And, as in all other cases in which the fancies or caprice of men is the only regulating standard, the mode of treatment has been exceedingly various.

Let me now more particularly call your attention to the obvious connection which the one parable has with the other, and the relation in which they all stand to the prediction of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, with the view of farther demonstrating that that is the personal return of Christ, and no *figurative* coming, either at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the overthrow of the Antichristian Apostasy.

The first parable, or simile, that of the fig-tree, relates entirely to the indications of His coming, intimating the duty of habitual attention unto them, and the capability of their being distinctly understood when perceived, as the approach of summer is discerned by the putting forth of leaves, "So, likewise, ye," says the blessed Saviour, "when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, [*He* is near, *marg.*] even at the doors." Mat. xxiv. 33. This has, therefore, an evident reference to what has previously been said, in the verses immediately preceding, of the coming of the Son of man. The correction of "He" for "it," made from the margin of some of our bibles, is adopted by Scott from Whithy, who justifies it as more agreeable to the original to understand "*He*, the Son of man, mentioned ver. 30, stands at the doors."

To the 34th and 35th verses I have already devoted the whole of my 3d Letter, and make no farther reference to them here, but proceed to the 36th, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Henry adopts the view given by Grotius, and still entertained by some, of there being a distinction between the time of "all these things," in the 34th verse, and "that day and hour," in the 36th, by

which the former is understood to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the latter to the personal coming of the Lord. This is the view which you had adopted when you delivered your first Lecture on the chapter, but which you avowedly abandoned when you reached the verse for exposition. But notwithstanding of the supposed distinction which Henry thus admits, with an inconsistency rarely equalled except in Scripture exposition, in which a license unknown in other departments of criticism seems claimed, he immediately proceeds to apply the 36th verse equally to *both* events. It is not, however, necessary that I should farther insist on the inseparable connection between "all these things," and on "*that day and hour*" of the coming of the Son of man as unknown, the character of which the Saviour immediately compares with that of the Antediluvians.

Besides the celestial and terrestrial signs given by our Lord of that glorious day, He has also furnished us with great moral signs by which its approach may be discerned. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, *so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*" ver. 37—39. Thus it is plainly predicted that immediately before our Lord's return mankind will have sunk into a state of degrading sensuality. Amid all the palpable tokens by which it is preceded, unimpressed by the denunciations of his wrath, they will be as insensible to their danger as were the antediluvians. The same awful features of ungodliness which characterized our race in the days of Noah shall prevail at the coming of the Lord. Regardless of the glory of God, and heedless of their souls' salvation, men shall have given themselves up to licentiousness and violence, to irreligion and to vice, in their most hideous forms. Wickedness as abandoned as ever vexed the soul of holy saint, shall have acquired a fearful ascendancy. And, oh ! who does not, in the present aspects of society, perceive the rapid degeneracy which may soon, very soon, realize in all its horrors, the frightful demoralization thus depicted by our Lord ! Sins of a nature too hideous to be mentioned even

by a licentious press, itself the organ of impurity, are daily perpetrated without exciting on the part of a large proportion of the population, one feeling of disgust, or one expression of holy grief. It may indeed be questioned, which is the most alarming?—the direful prevalence of grossest sin, or the awful apathy with which its commission is regarded. Let those whose powers of moral perception have not become dreadfully diseased say, whether there be not in the aspects of society something approaching to that state described by the Saviour. And let them consider whether it does not more correctly apply to present times, than it did to that of Jerusalem's destruction.

But as in the days of antediluvian guilt, men "*knew not* until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." What a state of awful ignorance! Ignorant of the value of Christ as a Saviour—ignorant of His design as an Avenger—ignorant of His purpose as a King,—they will be surprised in their self-willed ignorance, and overwhelmed in the midst of their sin. How awful is the criminality of the ignorance of those to whom God has so long proffered instruction! There is no cause for their ignorance but their own neglect or contempt of divine information—there is no palliation of that ignorance in which men obstinately remain—there is no cure for ignorance which despises all knowledge. And as it was in the days before the flood, the overflowing of divine indignation will sweep away ungodly scoffers, "walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they *willingly* are ignorant of, that, by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that *then was*, being overflowed with water, perished." 2 Pet. iii. 3—6. Well may all the tribes or kindreds of the earth mourn, when they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory: for, like the men before the flood, they reject the counsel of God against themselves. "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness unto all nations*, and *then* shall the end come." But this heavenly witness will be disregarded, the threatenings of God's word will be gene-

rally despised, as was the warning voice of faithful Noah; and the world will again be exposed to the fate of those who "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away." But perfectly safe shall those be, even in the day of his wrath, who by faith repose their trust on Him who is able to save, although we are taught that the number will be few; for "when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith upon the earth?" However they may be engaged, the angels sent forth to gather the elect will find and transport them to meet their coming Lord. "Then shall two be in the field; *the one* shall be *taken*, and the other *left*. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left. *Watch therefore*; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." ver. 40—42. The day of Christ will find ungodly men in a state little thinking of such a visitation. Engaged in the business of life, they shall be found in the field and at the mill. His own people, safe in every situation, will be found at their duties, till the hour when they "shall be taken" to himself.

These are characteristics which, though all applied by you to the destruction of Jerusalem, I can regard only as applicable to the personal return of Christ. Henry, with his usual facility, applies them first "to the *success of the gospel*," in its reception by some and rejection by others, and also "to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and the separation which will be made in that day." Thus it is, that by disjoining circumstances which our Lord has inseparably united, an explanation is sought for statements which in their proper and connected form can find no solution but in the personal coming of the Redeemer. Thus, notwithstanding of these applications of our Lord's injunction, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," Henry, without scruple, makes his first interpretation to the death of men. The duty of being always prepared for death is unquestionable, and I know no preparation more effectual than an abiding sense of the Coming of the Son of man, and habitual watchfulness for it. But familiarized as Christians have long been to call *death* the coming of the Lord, to admit that the death of either saint or sinner is the great event which the Saviour compares with that deluge which overwhelmed a guilty world, is a proposition which it seems impossible for a reflecting mind to admit.

The next comparison illustrative of the coming of the Son of man is that of a midnight thief. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come: But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." ver. 42—44. Still the object is to furnish information concerning the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, and to inculcate watchfulness concerning it. The comparison here made is the same with that applied by Peter to the personal Coming of Christ, when that apostle, in the passage already quoted, comparing it to the deluge, says, "the day of the Lord will come *as a thief*." 2 Pet. iii. 10. The same simile is again used by Paul, when writing to the church at Thessalonica. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh *as a thief in the night*. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you as a thief*. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us *not sleep*, as do others; *but let us watch*, and be sober." 1 Thes. v. 2—6. Not only is the comparison the same, but the same inference of *watchfulness* drawn by the Saviour, is here repeated by the apostle. It is the very argument deduced from their not being in darkness, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us *watch*, and be sober." So Christ, concerning His coming in the clouds of heaven, and its being *as a thief*, says, "Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, 'the Son of man cometh.'

The next parable in our Lord's discourse is one which more particularly applies to those having office in his church, still in reference to His Return. Connecting it with those he had already uttered, as each is related to that by which it is preceded, in this parable He says, "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made *ruler over his household*, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, *when He cometh*,

shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, *My Lord DELAYETH His coming;* and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; *the Lord of that servant shall come* in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ver. 43—51. In the preceding verses, our Lord tenders injunctions of watchfulness to all his followers; but, in the present case, the admonition is more immediately addressed to those in office. The servant is one whom the Lord has "made ruler over his household, *to give them meat in due season.*" This therefore, must represent the ministers of the gospel, whose office and duty it is to furnish their flocks with provision from the Master's stores. Theirs it is not only to wield the terrors of the law in arousing the careless and secure, or to exhibit the cross of Christ as the appointed and only way of salvation, but they are required to exhort all to *watchfulness* for the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds, and to supply them from the heavenly treasure with information concerning the purposes of God. It is their duty not merely to teach them the doctrines of salvation, but to unlock for their edification all the treasures of divine inspiration. They are, or ought to be, "ministers and *stewards of the mysteries of God.*" 1 Cor. iv. 1. Neglect is a breach of trust, in whatever department it may be. But here, the duty spoken of is especially connected with the glorious coming of Christ. Their watchfulness *with regard to it,* is that which is inculcated by the parable. And if they are thus placed under obligation to their flocks, "to give them meat in due season," what will be the reflections of those by whom the duty is neglected, should the Son of man be revealed without their having at all testified of his approach? If ever it was a duty to exhort to watchfulness, and the example of holy apostles even 1800 years ago show that it was, surely the obligation must be mightily increased, when almost the last sign has been fulfilled, and the glorious event is about to be realized. Let it not be forgotten that a blessing is pronounced on him "whom his Lord *when He cometh* shall

find *so doing*." To my utter astonishment, you applied this parable, like the preceding, to the destruction of Jerusalem; but as you did nothing in the way of supporting that application, I have assumed, in these remarks, that the preceding arguments have established the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven to be his personal return, and on this part of the parable will only farther add, that how *the blessing* here pronounced *upon the faithful steward* was in any way fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, is what I cannot perceive. Scott's exposition is again different from yours. "Our Lord," he says, "*at length more clearly* speaks of his coming *to take men away by death, and of his Second Advent to judge the world*;"—for wonderful as it may seem, he thus applies the parable *to both*. It will not, however, be farther necessary to *disprove* such an inconsistent and contradictory proposition, or again to say that the parable is merely another illustration of the one great and grand event concerning which the whole of the latter part of this chapter and the entire of the following one is occupied.

But our Lord presents the contrast to the faithful steward, and exhibits the practical effect of men's entertaining the idea that the coming of the Lord is a *distant* event. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, *my Lord delayeth his coming*, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants." This still represents the professing Christian, it is even the Christian minister that is supposed; and fearful it is to think that such should be found among the persecutors of Christ's people,—of Christian ministers, their "fellow-servants." But such, you perceive, is represented as the result of their views concerning the coming of Christ. Not that they question, not that they doubt, that He will come at some time. He is a "servant" of Christ that is mentioned, though an "*evil servant*;" and he acknowledges Christ as *his "Lord."* But he says, "*my Lord delayeth his coming*." This is the cause of his smiting his fellow-servants. From the parable I am thus distinctly taught that before the coming of Christ, Christians, and Christian ministers, will have the opposition, the absolute persecution of *false brethren*; and that this will be the case at the very time of Christ's return in glory, for when he "shall begin" to do so, "*the Lord of that servant shall*

come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." It is an awful thought, but I confess the impression is strong upon my mind, however reluctantly entertained, that in the proceedings of some late church courts, there has been evidence of too unequivocal a nature to admit of much doubt, that we already approach to the period more particularly referred to in the parable. Without seeking to vindicate all the doctrines condemned, I do think it ominous that while ministers openly preaching Arminian and Socinian doctrines are left unquestioned—while ministers neglectful of the most important duties of their office are tolerated in indolence and indifference—while ministers whose lives are flagrantly immoral remain unimpeached—the Church of Scotland, upon a charge of heresy, has lately cast from her communion men of holiest lives and ardent zeal for the glory of the Redeemer; and in one case, I am convinced a most unrighteous decision has been pronounced against a Scriptural doctrine, miserably misunderstood, and into the real nature of which little inquiry was made by many who hesitated not to pass judgment of condemnation upon their more faithful fellow-servant.*

But under the impression that their Lord "*delayeth his coming,*" the parable farther represents some of these rulers in his household, as not only beginning to smite their fellow-servants, but as also beginning "*to eat and drink with the drunken.*" The awful sin of intemperance, though it has swept through the length and breadth of the land like a desolating pestilence, destroying its thousands and its tens of

* In these days of *religious* calumny I am not unaware of the obloquy to which I may probably be subjected, by thus voluntarily associating my belief with that of one against whom public clamour is already loudly raised, and who has been authoritatively branded as a heretic. It is, however, my prayer to the God of truth, that I may be kept from that fear of man which bringeth a snare, and although I would have preferred silence where opportunity is wanting of unfolding fully my views, I am not very solicitous to escape all risk of unjust imputations, if the interests of injured truth demand such acknowledgment. On this subject, much has been written which I do not approve; but every sentence of Mr. M'Lean's remarkably distinct answers to the very absurd hypothetical questions of the Irvine Presbytery, (published entire in an explanatory Letter to Dr. Rodnian, by Warrand Carlile, Esq. Paisley,) I freely adopt as a confession of my faith concerning the perfect sinlessness of the fallen humanity of our blessed Lord.

thousands, does not appear to me to have yet assumed the aspect in which it is represented in the parable. Alarmingly general as drunkenness is, I regard the peculiar feature here represented as one which intimates a more advanced era. When, with such a degree of frequency as can mark it as a sign, ministers of the gospel shall begin to eat and to drink *with the drunken*, I shall regard it as additional and clearer evidence, that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. For "if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Such is the awful fate which awaiteth the unfaithful, unbelieving, and persecuting minister of the gospel, in the day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe." Dreadful it is to think that such should be the condemnation of any who minister in sacred things. But this is represented as actually the sin and the fate of some at the coming of the Lord. And although it cannot be regarded as a present portrait of ministerial character, soon the e may be witnessed, in the progress of immorality, such indifference to companionship among those who ought to be ensamples to their flocks, when they shall associate with the worthless, and learn of them their way.

Let those who watch the moral signs of Christ's return observe the connection in which it is here and elsewhere placed in relation to a dissolute state of society. In the 38th verse, our Lord compares the time of His coming to "the days that were before the flood." Regardless of their impending fate, "they were eating and drinking;" and in the 49th verse, He farther intimates, not only the prevalence of drunkenness, but the awful implication in its guilt of those who ought most loudly to testify against it. As the coming

of Christ is ever urged by himself and his apostles as a motive to holiness, so would I wish particularly to call attention to the sins which are here represented as then to be prevailing, and implore of men to consider the dangers they incur. "The end of all things is at hand; *be ye therefore sober*, and watch unto prayer." 1 Pet. iv. 7. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ... Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch, *and be sober*." 1 Thess. v. 2, 6. These cautions against the degrading vice of intemperance, although at no period unseasonable or uncalled for, still seem from the connection in which they are placed to imply increased temptations and extreme indulgence just before the coming of the Lord. While, therefore, such exertions are made for the Prevention and Cure of Intemperance by the combined efforts of associated men, let me suggest to Christian advocates for Temperance, a more frequent use of the Scriptural weapon provided by Christ and his apostles, against this growing and rampant sin. *The coming of the Lord*, in all its array of terror to the drunkard, is the argument to be urged in immediate bearing against its seductive influence. Let me then repeat it in admonition for the continued temperance of those who, in enjoined "moderation," are waiting for their Lord—let me urge it, in the language of solemn warning, on those who may be yielding to the seductive power of this abounding iminorality—let me thunder it in the ears of others going headlessly down the gulph of ruin, victims of this debasing and fatal vice—"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For AS A SNARE shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke xxi. 34—36. Unwilling to weaken the impression of a warning so solemn and appropriate, I leave it without farther comment, to the consciences of all.

In the next parable, the church is exhibited in a different point of view. This is one of an historical nature, in so far as the history bears upon the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. In the preceding illustra-

tions of that glorious event, I have shown that there is a constant reference to it, and that the one great purpose for which they were spoken, is the exhibition of circumstances relating unto it. In the parable last considered, the consequence of the *disbelief* of Christ's speedy coming is exhibited, and in the present one the *long and general neglect* of this truth in the church is foretold. This was to continue till near the very time of Christ's return. "Then," says the Saviour, "shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. And *five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels, with their lamps. *While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, *the Bridegroom came;* and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you I know you not. *Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*" Mat. xxv. 1—13. Still the same reiterated warning to watchfulness for the Coming of the Son of man,—a warning repeated with such frequency and earnestness as to leave the absolute neglect with which it is treated awfully criminal. It is the same important coming, and the connection of the parable with the preceding prediction is distinctly expressed. It is not to be applied to a multitude of times nor to more than one. It stands in inseparable connection with the preceding prediction, for it is "*then*" the kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins.

This with you was a point of the greatest difficulty. You would separate what Christ has joined, but where that disjunction could be most easily effected you were evidently at a loss to determine. The whole of the parables in the

24th chapter you applied absolutely to the destruction of Jerusalem; and how this, therefore, could be otherwise applied was a difficulty of which you could in no way get rid, without doing the utmost violence to the language. Rather, however than submit that the Coming of the Son of man is his personal coming, you committed that violence, although in a manner which sufficiently exposed itself. At one time you said you understood our Lord to refer here to the Christian church, after the coming of the Lord at the destruction of Jerusalem, spoken of in the preceding chapter, to which you conceived Him to refer by the word "*then.*" Again, however, you said that in it the Saviour looks forward to the very end, to the consummation of the Kingdom, when you affirmed He also looks forward in the same manner in the two parables which precede it, notwithstanding of the view you had previously given. Again, you regarded it as a *didactic* address; then as a *prophetic* parable. Afterwards you viewed it as referring to the union of believers with Christ, as if no particular time had been intimated by the "*then.*" Farther, you affirmed with confidence that it was the gospel dispensation in its finishing state; and lastly applied it to individuals at death. But amid all this variety of comings of the Bridegroom, presented at different times as the explanation of our Lord's *one* parable, there was a special care to exclude all view of the Bridegroom coming *immediately after* the great tribulation at the close of the times of the Gentiles. What is, however, the most remarkable is, that you should not have felt bound to confine it to the destruction of Jerusalem, as you did the coming of the Son of man, of the circumstances of which it is only an additional illustration. If our Saviour has restricted it by the word "*then*" to that period, no one is at liberty to remove it thence. And if that person find that his interpretation will not admit of the application of the Saviour's own illustration, he may receive this as evidence that his interpretation is wrong. Its utter inapplicability I shall therefore attempt to show, while I endeavour to demonstrate its confirmation of the view already exhibited.

The character of a Bridegroom, and the circumstances of a Marriage, it will be admitted, are of joyful and happy significance. And if so, the appropriateness with which they are used in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem is not

very obvious. It cannot be supposed that our Lord spake of an event of the most melancholy interest to his disciples under such a joyous figure. But to the personal return of Christ, both are happily applicable. It is an event for which the whole creation groans, longing to be delivered from the corruption under which it has been placed. But not only is the coming of the Bridegroom an event which by its very nature is inapplicable to the destruction of Jerusalem, but which may, from other passages, be proved to refer to the personal return of Christ. You yourself admitted on one occasion that *the absence* of the Bridegroom meant his personal absence, quoting in proof, Mat. ix. 15. Let us therefore examine this text. "Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees of John fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as *the Bridegroom is with them?* but the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be *taken from them*, and then shall they fast." From this it is indeed perfectly evident, that Christ speaks of his personal presence and absence, as that of the Bridegroom. *In his human nature* he was then "with" the children of the bride-chamber, and not either in his providence, or by his Spirit merely. It was in *that nature* also he was "*taken from them*," and therefore, his coming again as the Bridegroom must be his personal return.

But it is also of the highest importance to observe that during the whole period of the Bridegroom's absence, the children of the bride-chamber, or his disciples, *are to fast*, for they *cannot mourn* "as long as the Bridegroom is with them." His return must therefore be before the Millennium, and just at its commencement, for during that happy time they shall rejoice and not mourn. As the church will therefore have then ceased from her mourning the Bridegroom must have then returned, for in his absence, or *while taken from them*, they cannot rejoice. There is therefore an obvious and happy application of the Bridegroom's coming, to that of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, at the close of the times of the Gentiles, at the commencement of the Millennium; while it is altogether inapplicable to the destruction of Jerusalem. The return of the Bridegroom is distinctly exhibited in the book of the Revelation, and there also it is placed at the commencement of the Millennium. The

language of exultation there is, “Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him; for THE MARRIAGE of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Rev. xix. 7, 9. Now the celebration of *a marriage* necessarily supposes the *presence* of the Bridegroom. And this is immediately before His Millennial reign with his arisen saints is declared. Rev. xx. 4.

In the parable the Lord represents the condition of the church at the time of his coming in the clouds of heaven, and the views previously entertained concerning it “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.” Of this number, five were *wise*, and five were *foolish*; yet the Bridegroom having “tarried” beyond their expectations, “they all slumbered and slept.” In this state they continued till, “at midnight, there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.” What a faithful History of the church’s feelings and views on the subject of Christ’s return! With the minuteness of a Historian does the Saviour state the fact, and with more than Historian’s skill assigns the reason. Notwithstanding of all his warnings for *watchfulness*, because they *knew not* at what hour their Lord would come, the Saviour distinctly foretold that they would fall asleep upon the subject, and this was when, in the disappointment of their minds they thought “the Bridegroom *tarried*.” This it is which explains the present heedlessness of the church to the time of His coming, even of many of the *wise* virgins, Christ’s dear saints—it furnishes those who are looking for “that blessed hope” with an explanation which serves to console under all the opposition of brethren on a subject which radiates so delightfully the glory of God—it accounts equally for the opposition, often bitter, and sometimes profane, of others, seen among the “virgins” indeed, but giving little evidence of their being of the number of the “*wise*.” In an early stage of my own investigations, ere yet the Scriptural Evidence had wrought its work of complete conviction, when my mind was occasionally in danger of being overpowered by the angry opposition of those I was bound to love, the renewed consideration of this parable solaced my soul, restoring and increasing that settled trust on God’s own word which it then seemed as if the church had conspired to suppress. And it is gratifying to reflect, and it may be useful to state, that not

a few of those friends whose opposition I had early to encounter, but who now receive and bear testimony to the truth, regard this parable as affording the only proper explanation they can give for their former rejection of a doctrine attested by evidence so full, so varied, and so wonderfully precise.

This parable will not, however, apply to the conduct of the church, the real and hypocritical friends of Immanuel, at the destruction of Jerusalem. Had all the professors of the name of Jesus, the wise as well as foolish virgins of the kingdom of heaven, ceased to expect the destruction of Jerusalem? There was no relaxation on the part of Jewish Christians in expecting the overthrow of the city which they loved, and to which they clung with the ardour of devoted patriotism—a patriotism modified alone by their Master's denunciations of its desolation until His return. From the time the Saviour uttered his prediction of its doom, till the Romans laid Jerusalem in heaps, His afflicted disciples watched for its fate with certain assurance. It was not with respect to that event certainly that the wise virgins as well as the foolish had fallen asleep; and we have sometimes wondered what could be the nature of that *wisdom* which is attributed to *all* the followers of Jesus, when the coming of the Bridegroom in the parable is explained to be *their own death*, which they had all ceased to expect.

This is clearly the personal return of the Son of man, who now comes in the character of Bridegroom; not as when formerly he appeared in our world, but in a manner and with an attendance suited to his rank—with power and great glory, having angels obedient to his will, and ready in his service towards those who form his bride. Reluctant as Christians may still be to receive this truth, the parable itself had predicted the fact; but not less explicitly does it declare the awakening of all before our Lord arrive. Small as the church may then be, by the increased infidelity of the times, we are told of those then professing his name, not only the wise but the foolish, “*all* those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.” Destitute as they are of the grace of God, deceiving or being deceived, some will be found professedly looking for his appearing who shall yet be excluded from his presence, and be denied participation in the honours and enjoyments of the marriage supper. Let me

then call on all to examine themselves, and ascertain for certain that they have really obtained that oil for which there will not be opportunity to seek when Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.

The next parable inculcates upon the friends of the Redeemer the right occupation of the various talents with which they are severally intrusted. It informs us of the rewards to be bestowed upon the faithful at His Coming, and the punishment to be inflicted on the unfaithful. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. AFTER A LONG TIME, *the Lord of those servants cometh*, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold I have gained two other talents besides them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with

usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ver. 14—30.

In this, as in all the preceding parables, the great event still is *the coming of the Lord* as the period when his servants shall render an account of the manner in which they have improved their talents. As the parable of the Bridegroom is connected with those of the preceding chapter concerning the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven by the particle "then," so the present is again connected with that of the Bridegroom by the particle "for," with which it commences. I fully agree with you in preferring the supplement *He*, for the more lengthened, but certainly not more perspicuous one, "the kingdom of heaven is," which has been introduced in our translation. By this substitution, the parable is thus connected with the preceding context, "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. For *He* is as a man travelling into a far country." But you afterwards spake of its reference to Christ's coming ultimately—of His coming to individuals, which you were again pleased to say *He* does to every one—and of His dispensations, as to the Jews. And in a subsequent discourse you said, whether we are to understand the *reckoning* here referred to, of the conscience—of God's providence—of the soul at death—or the final judgment—it is *equally applicable*. In the following discourse, you said, that in the close of this parable we see the reward bestowed upon two, and the awful punishment of the third *at the day of death*, and at the last great day, when the Lord Jesus shall judge the world. The doom of the last, you continued, refers to the awful sufferings of the world to come, although *it may also* refer to the visible judgments sometimes inflicted on the wicked *before* they leave this state; and you concluded by applying it to the end of the world. With such a diversity of interpretations, what becomes of *the unity* of the Saviour's Discourse, on which you formerly insisted so strenuously as to deny all *suc-
cession* in the first part of the prediction? If the com-

ing of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven really was the mere infliction of God's wrath upon the Jews through the agency of second causes, then must this parable also have had its application at the same time, being merely an illustration of circumstances attending that event. These several parables, I have already shown, are united not only to each other, but through that connection they are all related to the prediction itself, through the first parable which is inseparably connected with the coming of the Son of man. This relationship is still maintained in the parable under consideration, commencing as it does with another reason or argument for watchfulness. "*For He is as a man travelling into a far country.*" It is thus evidently a discourse relating to what has already been spoken. It is just another *inference* from it, and one which furnishes new evidence against your idea of a figurative coming of Christ. Instead of being before the then living generation had died, "*He is as a man travelling into a far country,*" consequently he cannot very speedily be back; and thus his coming is not till "*after a long time.*" Besides, the Jews as a nation rejected the Saviour, and it does not therefore appear to be to them, or any such, that our Lord represents himself as committing the talents, but to those who are "*his own servants*" avowedly. The country into which the Traveller has gone, is heaven—his departure was his ascension in the clouds—the "*long time*" of his absence, is that of his session at the Father's right hand—the servants are those who profess themselves his disciples—the talents with which they are entrusted, are the various means and opportunities with which they are favoured, and which they are required to improve to his glory—and when, "*after a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them,*" his personal return must as really be meant as his personal departure and continued abode in heaven, realized the taking of his journey and continued absence—the reward of royal authority over cities bestowed upon his *faithful* servants, intimates the enjoyment of power and glory proportioned to their zeal and fidelity, when they shall live and reign with Christ 1000 years; and the punishment of the *lothful* servant, is that condemnation which shall be assigned to the merely

nominal Christian, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.

And oh, let it be observed as matter of fear to the professing church, that here the ground of condemnation is *slothfulness*. Let it be observed with due attention, with serious consideration, with deep alarm. Who can look abroad upon the great Christian community without seeing in fearful prevalence this ground of condemnation. Spiritual sloth is indeed a common disease, and its fatally desolating effects on the part of many cannot be concealed. It pervades all their thoughts, it is uttered in their words, it is visible in their conduct. They profess to believe in the existence of God, yet seem not to think of His omniscience—they read his word, but meditate not on its contents—they hear his gospel, and it is to them as an idle tale, or at best as a very lovely song, fitted only to please—they witness his judgments, while yet they are taught not righteousness—they can even hear unmoved, or with little apprehension, the thundered annunciation, that at length "*the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*" Infatuation unparalleled! Professing to believe the word of God, they wholly neglect for themselves its proclamations of mercy and denunciations of woe, till aroused by the command, never to be recalled, "*Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Oh, let me seek to arouse from a stupor which, if not soon shaken off, must prove the everlasting destruction of those who indulge in its guilt. Ere their coming Lord arrives, let them seek by His blood and assistance of his Spirit to be found among those on whom is pronounced the benediction, "*Well done good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*"

The last of the seven parabolic illustrations delivered by our Lord in connection with the prediction of his coming in the clouds of heaven, now demands our consideration. It is introduced in language so similar, as at once to intimate the identity of the coming spoken of, with that in the prediction itself: "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one*

from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on his right hand; but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." ver. 31—46.

Whatever diversity of opinion there may be among Antimillenarian Expositors with regard to the meaning of our Lord's direct prediction, or the application of all the other parabolic illustrations, there is on this a perfect harmony—with respect to *the time*, at least, to which it refers. All ideas of a figurative coming are now rejected; all the former variety of comings is dispensed with, and this stands forth, in the estimation of all, as a full declaration of his real personal return, and is by many accounted an exact representation of the attendant circumstances. Now it is not a little surprising, that when our Lord, in his prediction, should have so *expressly stated the time* of his com-

ing, there should be such difficulty in *fixing* that time, while here, when, if our Lord does not speak of the very same time, he refers to none at all, so little difficulty should be experienced in relation to it.

I have already shown the connection of this and all the parables with the prediction contained in the preceding chapter, but you spake of this being *a distinct paragraph*, and of its not being to be regarded as a parable. Although the appellation "sheep and goats" is figurative, you remarked, this is immediately departed from; and since it is not called a parable by the Spirit of God, you would not treat it as such. With respect to the use of the word *parable*, did any one better descriptive of its nature occur to me, I should be sorry to give you any unnecessary uneasiness by its use, although you yourself admit that it has some of the characteristics. But to refuse to recognize it as a parable, because the Spirit has not expressly called it such, is to refuse to do so on grounds which are utterly untenable. Do you refuse to recognize the illustration of the "virgins," or that of the *Traveller*, or that of the "talents," as parabolic, although the word is not used in either of them? Or is it more really "*a distinct paragraph*" than any one of these? Was it not equally spoken in answer to the questions of the disciples? Does it not equally tell of the coming of Christ? We have no intimation of there having been even the slightest interruption during the delivery of the whole discourse of which it forms a part. We have no information of *His Coming* being here something different from what it is in his direct prediction, or in any of the preceding parabolic illustrations.

The Saviour again takes to himself the same designation which he had done in his prediction, "the Son of man," which you said is characteristic of his personality, uniting the human and divine natures. In contrast to his former humiliation, you said, he would here seem to speak of his Second Coming, "when he shall come in his glory." Now is it not very remarkable that in his direct prediction you could not equally recognize his Second Coming, as that which is "with power and *great glory*." Is not the reference to these words very distinct, when the Saviour now says, "*when the Son of man shall come in his glory?*" He had already foretold distinctly the time of his coming,

and without unnecessary repetition of the time, he now tells farther what shall be done "when" he shall come. Here, again, his attendants are "all the holy angels;" now these he had previously declared shall be with him when he comes in the clouds of heaven, for then "He shall *send his angels*, and they shall gather together his elect." Once more, He here appears in the character of a "King," and "then shall he sit upon *the throne of his glory*;" and at his coming in the clouds of heaven, he had already predicted, "*the Kingdom of God* is nigh at hand." He shall then judge "all the nations," or "all the *Gentiles*," and he had previously declared not only the gathering of the elect, but also that "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn," when they see him coming. And the fate of both righteous and wicked, as here declared, is in exact accordance with the statements of preceding parables. Every circumstance concurs to prove, that our Lord is still referring to the same great event of his coming, and that this is another illustration of the circumstances which in preceding parables have already been in various important respects so minutely exhibited.

But if this were really an exact representation of the final judgment, and the preceding prediction of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven merely the declaration of *a figurative coming*, it is not a little remarkable, that while both Mark and Luke give pretty full accounts of the prediction itself—and the argument against you is rather strengthened than weakened by interpreting the prediction as applicable only to the destruction of Jerusalem—that they should wholly have abstained from here saying a single word of this important prediction of the final judgment, as you suppose, spoken on the same mount of Olives, to the same persons, and on the same occasion. If brevity were the reason of the omission, we should rather expect the *more important event* to have been the absorbing one, in their narratives. Yet these Sacred Historians have *both* entirely omitted in its place, that part of our Lord's Discourse which you regard as a very important and distinct prediction of the personal coming of Christ, while you consider they have both given a full account of a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, *under the name* of the coming of the Son of man. Say whether such an explanation

do not seem unnatural? Viewed, however, as *an illustration* of our Lord's prediction concerning his coming, the entire omission of the parable by these two evangelists, gives perfect harmony to the view we are naturally led to take of the record they have left. For while it must have appeared remarkable that when recording somewhat fully their Lord's Discourse concerning minor matters, they should both wholly overlook his prediction of an event of such stupendous magnitude, delivered at the same time, it appears perfectly natural when considered in the way in which it is now exhibited. Viewing this and the preceding parables recorded by Matthew as mere illustrations of the prediction so minutely recorded in the preceding chapter, and also by the other two evangelists, when we consider the greater brevity of their accounts of the prediction, it is precisely what was to be anticipated, that although they give fully the prediction itself, they should wholly omit this and other lengthened illustrations.

The partialities and prejudices of Expositors, in the very different reception which they give to certain portions of the word of God, as they may accord with, or seem in opposition to their peculiar views, is, however, remarkably illustrated in the instance before us. Even if every thing here narrated had had the clearest marks of an unfigured prediction, it could not be treated in a manner more direct than it is. Its statements are believed and cordially received, and greatly insisted on, while, as has been pretty fully exhibited in former Letters, all the statements in the preceding chapter, concerning the coming of the Son of man, are lowered down, and shadowed off with the utmost care. Now what is the reason of such diversity of treatment in these two cases, supposing that the verses now before us, instead of being a parabolic illustration of the previous prediction, were really in themselves a separate and distinct prediction? The reason, I suspect, is simply this, that in the former case, the Coming of the Son of man is fixed to a time which accords not with the views entertained upon the subject; while in the latter, it is supposed, no time is specified, and that consequently it may more easily be placed where it is wished.

The late Bishop of Landaff has well said, "When men are desirous of forming systems, they are apt to collect to-

gether a number of texts, which, *being taken as abstract propositions*, seem to establish the point; but which, *when interpreted by the context*, appear to have no relation to it. There is no greater source of error than this practice; it has prevailed in the Christian church from the earliest ages, and it still prevails. We owe to it the corruptions of Popery, and that infinity of heresies which have so much debased the simplicity of gospel truth, and driven so many men of sense from embracing Christianity." *Bishop Watson's two Sermons and Charge*, p. 70. With every circumstance in the occasion which led to the prediction of the Saviour's coming in the former chapter;—in the views of those to whom it was addressed;—of the statements it contains, and the language in which they are conveyed;—all intimating our Lord to be foretelling his personal return at the close of the times of the Gentiles, and the restoration of Israel, the prediction itself has been denied to mean more than the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, or the still future destruction of the divided Roman empire by some other power. And while this has been most confidently affirmed, simply on the ground of some difficulties, created without cause and adhered to in the face of disproving evidence, *the illustration* of that prediction has not only been affirmed to refer to his personal return, but has been magnified into undue importance, as if it were the only prediction our Lord had left concerning his coming.

Not only so, indeed, but having with so much ease disposed of all the obvious evidence, direct and collateral, adduced in proof of the real meaning of the prediction of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, it is then made matter of complaint that *demonstration* of our views has not been given by the advocates of the premillennial return of the Redeemer. Such a reception of evidence, and such inattention to all the circumstances calculated to throw light on the meaning of the prediction, will sufficiently account for the fact, however amazing, of Mr. Faber's want of success in our desperate cause, when prompted by a superabundance of generosity himself to become the advocate of views he found so miserably defended. This manner of disposing of evidence will easily explain how it is that with all his *professional* skill and *Millenarian* zeal,—with all the *candour* which such impartiality

implies, and with all the industry to which his interest in the Millenarian cause could incite—Mr. Faber has to enter his complaint, that “*the sole APPARENT evidence* which, *after long thought on the subject, I have been able to discover,*” is the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians. *Sac. Cal.* vol. III. p. 434. The above remarks will, perhaps, readily suggest to the reader the means by which that author, when he happened to stumble on any passage which opposed his views, could easily extricate himself from all supposed difficulties, and will exhibit how easily, and how much to his own satisfaction, he could also dispose of our “sole apparent evidence.”

But with all this demand for *demonstration* from us, and with all this inability to perceive its force when presented,—that with so strong a desire to do justice to our cause, it might naturally be expected that Mr. Faber will be jealous of whatever might unduly prejudice it, nor readily *assume* any position of hostility without that *demonstration* which he requires at our hand. Are we then allowed these advantages? Is all his opposition characterized by this cautious search for truth? And does his evidence always approach to demonstration? No; the most important points are assumed, without the shadow of proof; and positions which never could be proved, are laid down as incontrovertibly true. When the question is concerning the premillennial coming of Christ, he seems to consider it sufficient to secure the assent of rational and Christian men *simply to affirm*, that in Mat. xxiv. the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven is only a *figurative coming*, and that in Mat. xxv. we have, in contradistinction, “our Lord’s own account of His literal Second Advent,” and that this coming is after the Millennium. *Sac. Cal.* vol. I. p. 438.

Let me now call your attention more particularly to the verses cited: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.” Although you twice admitted that the coming here spoken of must just be that alluded to repeatedly in the preceding part of the chapter, you yet more generally proceeded as if it were not inseparably connected with a direct prediction, having a specified time, but were merely an isolated passage, to which no chronology was attached. On the last of the occasions

already mentioned, you said the time here referred to by the "when," might be ascertained either from the context or from other passages. If to *either* the decision of the question be submitted, I have little reason to fear the issue. To both points your attention has already been repeatedly called. I have especially fully shown that this "when" He shall come in his glory, must refer to his personal return, immediately after the great tribulation at the close of the times of the Gentiles. In "the context," he had already declared this as the time of His coming "in the clouds of heaven with power and *great glory.*" To the various parabolic illustrations of that event, he is about to add another, and therefore with perfect distinctness does He say, "*when* the Son of man *shall come in his glory,*" he shall sit upon his throne. It was not necessary, on each occasion of his stating some new particular concerning his coming, that he should repeat *the time*, which he had already given with so much minuteness in the preceding chapter. All that was required was to mark the fact that he really did refer to that coming in "*great glory,*" and this he does fully by simply stating it to be "*when* the Son of man *shall come in his glory.*" But should the identity of this coming not be discerned by its character of "*glory,*" nor even by its being the coming of "*the Son of man,*" the prophecy and the illustration of it again correspond in another of its characteristics, "*and all the holy angels with him.*" The perfect correspondence which there is between them in this respect also, is so marked that it is really astonishing how you could fail to recognize the identity of that coming which it is the object of both to exhibit. But one of the grounds of diversity alleged by you is still more remarkable. Here, you observed, our Lord predicts his being attended at his coming with "*all the holy angels;*" while, you stated, that of the predicted angelic attendants on his coming, in the preceding chapter, the adjective "*holy*" was not introduced. From this you inferred that in the one case the term "*angel*" was to be received in its usual acceptation, while in the other you considered it more naturally to be referred to *the messengers of the gospel.* I cannot help regarding this as a very wonderful distinction, and one which, if applied in other cases relating to angels —angels whose *holiness* you yourself would not question—

would humble many of these pure spirits from the elevated rank in which God has placed them. But can it not be inferred that in the preceding chapter the *angels* spoken of as being sent forth by the Son of man at his coming to "gather together *His* elect," are "holy," although they are not expressly so called? Is there no such information supplied either in the character of Him by whom they are sent, or in the nature of the mission on which they are employed? Are we not in reality taught expressly by our Lord the *holiness* of these angelic beings? Surely it may in this case be regarded as sufficient evidence of their being "*holy angels*," that Christ himself acknowledges them to be "*His angels*."

To proceed, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations;"—or rather, as it is in the original, "*all the nations*." From this it has been inferred, that Christ's coming will not be till the consummation of all things, because He is represented as gathering "*all nations*" before Him—and consequently, it is supposed, the whole human race. It is generally assumed that "*all nations*," here, includes not only the whole of mankind alive at the time, but also the whole of the human family who have ever lived, or ever will. This is, however, an unwarrantable assumption. Τα εθνη, translated "*nations*," is never in any way, applied to the dead, so far as we can discover. Even in English, the word *nations* is only applied to men in their earthly relations—such distinctions being lost in the future state. But the term here used in the Original, although it signifies "*the nations*" in a general sense, has also a more limited signification, being very frequently restricted to *the Gentiles* only, as distinguished from the Jews. Thus, in these very predictions it is so used when the Saviour says, "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles*, until the times of *the Gentiles* be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24. Again, when He sent forth the apostles, he said unto them, "*Go not into the way of the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.*" Mat. x. 5, 6. It is used in the same sense in the blessing of the aged Simeon, "*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*" Luke ii. 32. It

is often so used by Paul: "Wherefore remember," says he to the Ephesians, "that ye being in time past *Gentiles* in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision." Ephes. ii. 11. Again, speaking of the mystery of the gospel, he says, "it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit, that *the Gentiles** should be fellow-heirs." Ephes. iii. 6. In the parable, it might therefore be rendered, "and before Him shall be gathered *all the Gentiles*."

In the prophecies also, the expression "all nations," is sometimes used where the whole human family *alive* are evidently *not* included. It is the very expression used by the prophet Zechariah, in reference to the destruction of Antichristian nations at the coming of the Lord before the Millennium; to which prophecy our Lord probably alluded: "Behold the *day of the Lord* cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather *all nations* against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. *Then shall the Lord go forth*, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." Zech. xiv. 1—3. This is repeated, Joel iii. 1, 2: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather *all nations*, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." And again, the Lord threatens the utter destruction of "all nations," when, it will be admitted, it cannot be understood absolutely of the whole human family. "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon *all nations*, and his fury upon all their armies; *he hath utterly destroyed them*, he hath delivered them to the

* Of *Eighty-seven* times in which the "Gentiles" are mentioned in our translation of the New Testament, in above *Eighty* the original Greek has this very word.

slaughter." Is. xxxiv. 1, 2. To this dreadful event our Lord appears to refer, in the parable, when he shall destroy the nations which have so long been favoured with the blessings of his gospel without availing themselves of its privileges; and when his own people shall be made participants of the joy and honour of his millennial kingdom.

In stating the different significations of the word "nations," in the original, you admitted that it is indeed used for "Gentiles" as distinguished from the Jews, but observed, what I freely admit, that it is also used in a more extensive sense, as when, in Rev. vii. 9, John "beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number, of *all nations*, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." And again, God "hath made of one blood *all nations* of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts xvii. 26. Here, you remarked, all are included, both Jews and Gentiles. This is indeed true, and that the word rendered "nations" is used in this extensive sense is unquestionable, but you will observe that in neither of the passages just cited is the article "the" introduced in the original, which, in the parable, I think limits it to "*the Gentiles*." Our Lord in a preceding part of his Discourse had predicted that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of *the Gentiles*, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." These Gentiles appear to be those of Christendom, whose times are fulfilled just before the Millennium, and are, I conceive, "*the nations*" here referred to. In Rom. xi. 25, Ταῦτα εθνῶν must mean the Gentile nations of Christendom; for the nation of Israel is not to be converted, "*until THE FULNESS of the Gentiles be come in.*" Now this cannot mean all the nations of the world, for it is not till after the conversion of Israel that many of these nations are to be brought into subjection to Christ—the children of Israel being employed in their conversion. Instead therefore of the conversion of all nations *preceding* the in-gathering of the Jews, their conversion *must* precede that of many of the Gentiles, and therefore, the reference must be to those Gentile nations which have been favoured with the gospel of the grace of God, and who have so awfully undervalued the privilege; whose *fulness* of the saved shall have come in before the coming of the Lord. On these grounds do I believe, that the Saviour instead of giving an exact representation of the final judgment, after the Millennium, here

presents us with another parabolic illustration of his coming, immediately after the great tribulation, which will be farther evident from a more particular examination of its statements.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, *THEN shall He sit upon THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY.*" From this it is evident that the Son of man is not yet seated upon the throne of *his* glory. This he shall attain only when he "shall come in his glory." It is "then," and not before. After his ascension to heaven, Christ speaks of being seated on his *Father's* throne, between which and his own he draws a marked distinction. Unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, John was commanded to write the Saviour's promise, "To him that overcometh, will I grant *to sit with me in MY throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with *my Father in HIS throne.*" Rev. iii. 21. "The Lord said unto my Lord, *Sit thou at my right hand*, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," which, it is farther stated, will be when "thy people shall be *willing* in the day of *thy power.*" Ps. cx. 1, 3. It is therefore in His Millennial Kingdom that the Son of man "shall sit upon the throne of *his* glory." Accordingly Paul represents "*his appearing* and *his kingdom*" as being at the same time." (2 Tim. iv. 1.) And Christ himself in this very Discourse, as already noticed, in speaking of his coming in the clouds of heaven, says, "So, likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, *know ye that THE KINGDOM OF GOD is nigh at hand.*" Luke xxi. 31. How distinctly does this again express the identity of the Coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory with this additional parabolic illustration of it!

"*Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*" Now this I consider to be as really parabolic as the admission of the *virgins* to the marriage in the beginning of the chapter, and think this manner of separation no more to be literally understood than the entry of the wise *by a door*, or the similar exclusion of the foolish. Not only indeed is it found among parables, forming one of a series—having the ap-

pearance and serving the purpose of a parable,—but if viewed literally, its statements will be found in opposition to those of whose meaning no doubt can be entertained. Henry, while he regards this as a description of the process of the last judgment, makes a distinction which you never acknowledged, and which you appeared afraid to make. He admits that “some passages there are in it that *are parabolical*, as the separating between the sheep and the goats, and the dialogues between the judge and the persons judged.” You, however, regarded both as literally descriptive. Such a view is indeed essential to your general interpretation; and the person who can make *and adhere* to such an admission as that just quoted, may be easily convinced that the whole is merely an additional illustration of the previous prediction of the coming of the Son of man. For if the representation of such a *separation* be “parabolical,” is it not evident that the previous representation of their being all “gathered before Him,” in order to their being so separated will be of the same character? That it must be so I shall farther endeavour to prove.

Your explanation of the whole passage was entirely literal. Can this then be sustained? In the representation, literally understood, we have the whole assembled species at once arraigned before the judgment-seat; and, in the first instance, *brought promiscuously together*. Now it is not to be questioned, from other passages, that *in the order* of the resurrection, the righteous will have *some precedence* over the wicked. You yourself on one occasion spoke of the righteous and the wicked rising *near together*. This implies the fact of their *not* doing so at the *same* time. If so, it is not necessary for my present purpose to determine the length of time which is to elapse between—whether one day or one thousand years. But the fact itself is universally admitted, that the righteous do rise *before* the wicked. Now for what purpose is such a precedence obtained, if they are immediately after to be again mixed together? Is it to be supposed that in the resurrection itself these two classes are entirely separated by the very act of the righteous rising before the wicked, only to be again mingled together whenever they shall be placed before the judgment-seat—and this second jumbling together being for no other purpose than that they may again be immediately separated, to be placed

the one on the right hand and the other on the left. You speak of the propriety and fitness of such a judgment as you represent the parable to exhibit; but where is the propriety, where the fitness, of such a separation, and re-uniting, and subsequent division, as your view necessarily implies?

Again, in the parable before us, all nations are represented as being gathered together—then separated into two great companies,—and as having judgment pronounced upon the whole of each division simultaneously. But, by interpreting literally another of the parables considered, (ver. 14—30,) we have a very different view of the procedure of judgment. In it, each individual is called forward, singly, and successively, to give account of the improvement he has made of the talents intrusted to him; and, *individually*, they receive rewards proportioned to the zeal they have severally displayed in the occupation of the talents committed to them. Thus the consequence of interpreting literally the language of these parables, is to set Scripture against itself, by applying it to purposes it was never designed to serve.

But that it does not refer to the general judgment is farther evident from *the rule* of procedure. It is not applicable to the whole, but to a particular class. All “the nations” here spoken of must have been favoured with the gospel among them. The ground of acquittal or condemnation, respects only the love which has been displayed towards the saints. This rule of judgment is therefore inapplicable to those of heathen nations who have gone down to the dust, without having ever heard the Saviour’s name, or known one poor disciple. Moreover, this representation cannot be literally understood as applicable to all individuals, even in the nations called *Christian*, without setting the parable in direct opposition to the plain statements of Scripture. These nations are represented as divided into only two classes. All, therefore, who are not found on the right hand must be included among those on the left. But none are received to the right except such as have testified their love to Christ by deeds of benevolence to his saints, in circumstances of distress; although we have full assurance that all who rely by faith on the merits of the Redeemer’s blood shall be saved, even if grace has been bestowed when under such circumstances as may deprive

them of all opportunity of displaying their love by the deeds to which it prompts, as in the case of the penitent thief on the cross.

You here discoursed largely on the duties of benevolence as arising from principles implanted in the human mind,—as being enjoined by the law, and inculcated in the gospel. And viewing them to be here exhibited as *the fruit* and *the evidence of faith*, you appeared to consider you had taken up the argument by which it is supposed to be limited to the coming of Christ at the commencement of the Millennium. But you entirely failed in showing how a judgment proceeding upon either the fruit or the evidence of "faith" could apply to those who never heard of Christ; or how this could be the general judgment, including all who had died without being placed in any situation affording them an opportunity of performing acts of kindness to believers. You however remarked that Christ specifies these as duties most apt to be neglected, but that it is not his design to include every particular, and that those must be excepted who have not had the means. But having made this exception, are we to suppose that to be the representation of the general judgment, in the terms of which there is no reference whatever to rules applicable to so large a portion of accountable men?

Bishop Porteus says, our Lord here "questions them on one most important branch of their duty, as *a specimen* of the manner in which *the inquiry into the whole of their behaviour* will be conducted." This however is mere assumption, and cannot be admitted as evidence that all are included in the judgment thus represented, while the Saviour himself has given no such information. "A specimen" it never can be of the manner in which other duties have been performed by those who never enjoyed the privileges which the "specimen" necessarily supposes—access unto, and knowledge of, the saints of Jesus.

"No doubt," says Scott, on the other hand, "impenitent sinners of every age and nation will then be judged; but those to whom the Scriptures are sent," he continues, "are *chiefly* concerned in this previous delineation of the final judgment, and its process and event; and therefore," he affirms, "our Lord represents nothing more than the ground on which false professors of Christianity will be

condemned." Now this is really one of the most convenient modes of theorizing which could possibly be adopted. It is at once assumed that we have here a literal "delineation of the final judgment"—and assumed, too, with the very acknowledgment of important discrepancies in the description when applied to that event—then as "those to whom the Scriptures are sent," are alone introduced in the Saviour's representation, this is at once accounted for, on the ground of their "being *chiefly* concerned," although absolutely no other has found a place in the scene, not even the most subordinate. This entire want of accordance between the representation given by Christ, and the interpretation put upon it by his Commentator, is however in his estimation easily rectified. The great defect in the Scripture statement is at once supplied by the latter; for he has "*no doubt*, impenitent sinners of every age and nation will *then* be judged," although he finds no proof of the fact. Truly the marvellous ease with which our Lord's direct prediction of his coming is itself disposed of, is not more remarkable than the manner in which its illustrations are magnified into an importance sufficient to occupy its place. We must not, however, forget that it is our Lord's statement which we are bound to receive, nor are we to overlook the fact that in it only a certain class are specified.

It is therefore the judgment of the Gentiles who have been favoured with God's word, and who, in point of fact, have professed themselves his friends. Even those on the left hand, the heirs of condemnation, recognise the Son of man as *their* "Lord," and address him as such. ver. 44: You yourself, on one occasion, acknowledged, indeed, that they are evidently Christ's false professing friends." He left with his disciples a "new commandment" to cultivate mutual love, and has said, "by this all men shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye love *one another*." At his return, their obedience to, or disregard of this new commandment, will form a criterion of their real discipleship.

But the manner in which this criterion is applied, as here represented, is evidently parabolic. Christ first addresses the righteous, by stating their love to himself, as evidenced in their conduct. *They* are next represented as replying to Him—not one, but all; not individually, but collectively. Yet even this you interpreted literally. Can

you really suppose this literally to take place? Or was it a fear that to admit the speech put into their mouths not to have been really spoken would have destroyed the evidence for an actual separation in the specified form, and the distinct arrangement of the two classes?

Of the reply of the righteous, Henry says, "the expressions *are parabolical*, designed to introduce and impress these great truths that Christ has a mighty regard to works of charity, and is especially pleased with kindnesses done to his people for his sake." Now this is precisely the view which I take of the entire representation; and there is no good ground on which a part of it can be so understood that may not be equally extended to the whole. But you said, "these words may be interpreted literally, or they may be considered as the import of what will then take place—the passage seems to intimate that *the King will indeed speak*." Now if you think it may be interpreted literally, and that the King will indeed speak the words here used, then you must be bound also to admit that both the righteous and the wicked will speak likewise. They are equally represented as speaking; and indeed you afterwards said that we could not suppose that the righteous *put the questions* here stated in a spirit of contradiction; and so likewise that neither can we suppose the wicked endeavouring to practise upon and deceive the Judge,—that we cannot suppose they charge the Judge with falsehood when they reply, "When saw we thee an hungered," &c. Their questions, you added, must therefore be viewed as arising from their blindness, ignorance, and stupidity; that unacquainted with the spirituality of the law they put these questions. Can you really imagine then, that all this vast assemblage of righteous persons *simultaneously* or successively put the questions here intimated? And that all this vast assemblage of wicked persons also follow their example? To suppose that the words here stated as really spoken by Christ, and really replied to by an assembled world, collectively or individually, is an idea which I could not easily have supposed you would adopt. Your preference of such an interpretation to that which would regard the passage as parabolic, and as expressive of the import of Christ's judgment on a certain class at his coming, admits indeed of easy explanation. But however necessary it may be for

the preservation of your literal interpretation of the parable, I am persuaded that in this few will follow you; and it may be of service that you have so exhibited the consequences of such an exposition—consequences which I have little doubt will occasion its entire rejection by many who may not hitherto have fully attended to them.

The last thing to be here noticed is the result of the whole; “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.” “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” ver. 34, 41, 46. Such is the result of this judgment, the exhibition and inculcation of which is the Saviour’s object in the whole representation. This you considered it impossible to apply to any thing else than the general judgment. I know no reason why it should be so restricted. Strong and decisive as the language is, it exactly corresponds with that used in the other parables. Can any thing be more dreadful than exclusion from the marriage-supper of the Lamb? Yet to the importunity of the foolish virgins, the Bridegroom’s appalling reply is, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not.” Look again at the reward assigned to the faithful steward, and the condemnation pronounced on him who is unfaithful; and say whether the language is not equally strong and explicit. He who is faithful to the cause of his Master, shall at his coming be made “*ruler over all his goods;*” while he who is unfaithful shall be *cut asunder*, and have “*his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” Mat. xxiv. 47, 51. The language thus employed is little less strong than that with which the present illustration is closed, although by you applied directly to the destruction of Jerusalem. In the parable of the talents, the approbation expressed of those who had profitably employed what was committed to their care, and the condemnation of him who had been slothful is not less decided. “His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee *ruler over many things;* enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into *outer darkness*; there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Mat. xxv. 21, 30. If to the representations in which such language occurs, you do not refuse to apply the term parabolic, (and we have seen you do not and can not,) it will be difficult on this ground to object to the same application in the instance under consideration.

Once more, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but, *while men slept*, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat." Here, also, as in the separation of the nations as sheep from the goats, it is the purpose and promise of Christ, "*In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles TO BURN THEM; but gather THE WHEAT into my barn.*" Now observe how our Lord's explanation confirms the connection which I have been endeavouring to establish between the prediction of his coming in the clouds of heaven *at the end of the age* (Mat. xxiv. 3, 30,) and the illustration of that event, in the separation of the righteous and the wicked, now under consideration. The result is, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." "*As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire,*" says our blessed Lord, in this parable, "*so shall it be in the end of the world [or age,] the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire;* there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall *the righteous* shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. xiii. 24, 30, 40—43. You will not question that this is a parable; yet the result to the righteous and the wicked, which it is designed to exhibit, is precisely the same with that under notice. Still the same view is given, and the same doctrine taught, by another parable delivered in the same discourse, and recorded in the same chapter with that of the tares; for, "*again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of EVERY kind; which when it was full they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered THE GOOD unto vessels, but cast THE BAD away.*" So shall it be at the end of the age. The *angels* shall come forth, and sever the

wicked from among the just, and shall cast them *into a furnace of fire*; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." ver. 47—50.

These clear parabolic statements, perfectly similar as they are in every respect, should remove your objections on the nature of the sentence pronounced. Nor is the formality of judgment, here represented, inconsistent with the view already given, when compared with other Scriptures. Thus, for example, we have in Dan. vii. 9, 10, the destruction of Antichrist before the Millennium, part of which has been already executed, set forth under the representation of a judgment—the thrones being placed, the books opened, &c. "I beheld," says the prophet, "till the thrones were cast down, [set or placed,] and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; *the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*" No one doubts that this is before the Millennium, whatever interpretation they may put upon it. Living, as we now are, in the scene referred to, without witnessing in form the solemnities here described, the language of the prophecy may serve to illustrate that of the parable. Both refer to times before the Millennium; and the objector to our view of the latter should be prepared to explain on his own principles the statements of the former.

Lastly, the "Kingdom" which the righteous are called to inherit is evidently that kingdom which is "nigh at hand" when the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, at the close of the times of the Gentiles, corresponding exactly with that Kingdom in the parable of the tares, out of which are to be gathered "all things that offend," and "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun *in the kingdom of their Father.*" Thus again have we evidence of this being only another illustration of the preceding prediction. The "Kingdom" has been "prepared" for the righteous; when the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, it is "nigh at hand," and when He "shall sit upon the throne of his glory" they shall be invited to "inherit" it.

The wicked are sent away into "everlasting fire prepared

for the Devil and his angels;" and it is a fact worthy of notice, that when the Antichristian confederation is destroyed, immediately *before* the Millennium observe, the Apocalyptic "beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worship his image; *these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*" xix. 20. And that this lake of fire is that "prepared" *for the devil and his angels* is obvious from the fact, that after the Millennium, when the final confederation of the nations, against the camp of the saints and the beloved city, is destroyed by fire from heaven, "the Devil that deceived them *was cast into the [same] lake of fire and brimstone, WHERE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE,*" previously. Rev. xx. 10. Here therefore, as in every other instance, we have a striking coincidence, favouring the view already offered of the representation which you consider an exact delineation of the process of the final judgment being only an additional illustration of the more direct prediction of Christ's return in glory, at the close of the times of the Gentiles.

In concluding this lengthened examination of these parables, I trust their real meaning and connection with our Lord's prediction of his coming has been rendered more obvious. If so, you will admit that coming to be personal, since this interpretation, and this alone, you give to part of what is thus proved to be merely illustrative of it. That these remarks may be blessed of God to your advantage, is the heartfelt desire of one who with a sense of his own unworthiness desires to be instrumental in promoting the glory of Him to whose grace he is wholly indebted, and who unfeignedly acknowledges himself with much respect,

Reverend Sir,

Your ever obliged servant in Christ, &c.

LETTER X.

ON THE SIGNS, CELESTIAL AND TERRESTRIAL, WHICH
PRECEDE THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE CLOUDS
OF HEAVEN.

REVEREND SIR,

I have hitherto abstained from saying much relative to certain signs given by our Lord as the immediate precursors of his return. This is however matter of considerable importance; for if the Saviour has vouchsafed to furnish us with what is suitable for premonition, by neglect we incur guilt, and deprive ourselves of information he has been pleased to impart. The question of the disciples relative to their Lord's return, was respecting "the sign," rather than concerning the event itself. Much of his answer is also to be regarded in the same light, as a sign or signs given with the view of forewarning the disciples of what had first to take place. Viewing the several parts as individual signs they are numerous, clear, and easily understood. These signs are both of a moral and physical kind. They are, however, principally of a moral nature; and, therefore, most easily discerned by those who being renewed in the spirit of their minds are more alive to the impressions of moral susceptibility. Of those of a physical kind, some are rare, stupendous, and at all times uninfluenced by the intervention of human agency. From their very nature and extensive prevalence, both are within the range of ordinary observation, and beyond the reach of imposture to effect, and therefore perfectly adapted for the great purpose they are designed to serve.

I do not farther revert to those of which I have formerly spoken, as having been already fulfilled; but would now solicit for a little your attention to some which yet remain unaccomplished, but which precede the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. Before that event we are taught by the Saviour himself to expect the Restoration of the Jews to their own land. Jerusalem shall first be "trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This "*until*" clearly intimates that

so long as Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, their times will not be fulfilled ; and it is not until after Jerusalem *has ceased* to be so trodden down, or till it shall again enjoy the occupancy of those whose capital it was, and shall again be, that the coming of the Son of man will be realized. From Old Testament prophecies I infer, that their Restoration will be effected in the confusion of the nations which takes place in the great tribulation, under the outpouring of the seventh vial. This therefore is one great sign which I regard as still unfulfilled.

But great and important as the Restoration of Israel is, if the Lord will, it may very speedily be effected. At this moment, there is less in the way than there has been since their first expulsion by the Romans. By the outpouring of the sixth vial, in the drying up of the Euphrates, the Lord has been preparing their way ; and in the present state of Turkey, the sovereignty of Palestine might probably be procured on easy terms from the Sultan of the Sublime Porte ;—to whose revenue it in fact yields little, and to whom, in his present emergency, money is of vast importance. A few months back this project was said to be seriously entertained, the greatest capitalist living being then regarded as the future sovereign of Judea. But while I thus speak of mere natural appearances, in so far as concerns the probability of a speedy restoration of the Jews, it is not thus I expect the fulfilment of Jehovah's pledge to the seed of Abraham. Feasible as the scheme might appear, I said at the time, the redemption of Zion from Gentile oppression was to be obtained otherwise than by pecuniary purchase. Having respect to the authority which declares that "Zion will be redeemed *with judgments*," and which gives promise to the captive daughter of Zion, "Ye shall be redeemed *without money*," (Is. i. 27. iii. 3.) such speculations only called forth more marked attention to the purpose of God. But this does not in the least abate my confidence that their Restoration is near, nearer than their national conversion. God has for a length of time been preparing their way, and among themselves the expectation becomes general that the covenant made with their fathers will in this respect be speedily fulfilled. Hath not the Lord said unto Zion, "Thy children shall *make haste*, and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee" ? Is. xlix.

17. And is it not their national restoration, rather than their conversion, (and certainly the promise is to *them* alone,) which for its suddenness is compared to birth pangs : “ Who hath heard such a thing ? Who hath seen such things ? Shall *the earth* be made to bring forth *in one day* ? Or shall *a nation* be born at once ? for as soon as *Zion* travailed, she brought forth her children.” Is. lxvi. 8. The present state of the nations may soon open a way of which the Jews will readily avail themselves for returning to the beloved land of their fathers. Reasoning even from analogy, events of greatest moment, and prodigious in their magnitude, would now excite less admiration than would formerly have been created by those of much less importance. And certainly the rapidity with which, of late, revolution has followed revolution, leaves us little room to calculate on the Restoration of Israel as a *distant* event.

But another of the signs given by our Lord, as preceding his return is *the universal preaching* of “ the gospel of the Kingdom.” The coming of Christ forms the commencement of a *new* age, the annunciation of which is to be made, and invitations to its honour given, before the close of the present age. “ This gospel of the Kingdom,” said the Saviour, “ shall be preached *in all the world*, for a witness unto *all nations*, and *then* shall the end come.” Mat. xxiv. 14. In no sense do I regard this sign as yet fulfilled. Extensive regions have never heard of the name of Christ; and to whom access has not hitherto been obtained. But the language of our Lord appears to intimate more than the preaching of *salvation* through his name. It is “ the gospel of the kingdom” which is the message; and refers apparently to that wondrous condescension of the Son of God in ruling over our regenerated world. It is called the “gospel of the Kingdom,” and even to misgoverned nations it ought certainly to be regarded as “ good news.” This gospel being that of the “ Kingdom,” the term naturally suggests it to be the annunciation of the Redeemer’s Royalty. But this view is farther strengthened by attending to the fact that the Saviour calls it “ *this* gospel of the Kingdom.” It is therefore of the Kingdom about which he then spake. And of what Kingdom did he then discourse but of that “ Kingdom of God” which is “ nigh at hand,” when the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven with power and

great glory? Its establishment is to be viewed as matter of gratitude, for it is the gospel or *good news* of the Kingdom, and thus corresponds with what Christ farther says concerning his coming, “When these things begin to come to pass, *then look up and lift up your heads*; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

This sign you may also think distant; but judging of the progress which the proclamation of the Redeemer’s Speedy Personal Return has already made within so short a time, not merely in this country, but on the Continents both of Europe and America, I consider its fulfilment as in all probability much nearer than many may consider practicable. And as the shaking of the nations makes progress, the importance of the duty will more obviously appear; and as the Lord opens up a way, he may also endow men peculiarly fitted for the work, until with the rapidity of the eagle’s flight that be fully realized which was exhibited in symbol, when in Apocalyptic vision, John “saw another angel *fly* in the midst of heaven, *having the everlasting gospel to preach* unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, *saying, with a loud voice,* Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgments is come.” Rev. xiv. 7.

Another sign which I consider as unfulfilled, is the appearance of *false Christs and false prophets*. Besides those pretenders predicted by our Lord as at the destruction of Jerusalem, and of which History furnishes us with account, a second class of these Impostors appear to be foretold by Christ as yet to appear. Concerning that greatest tribulation which ever was or shall be, it is said, “Except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened. *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ or there, believe it not.* For there shall arise *false Christs and false prophets*, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Here the appearance of these impostors is fixed by the word “*then*” to the great tribulation. And again reasoning from analogy, this in itself seems very probable. The Jews, I have already remarked, return to their own land in an unconverted state. They disbelieve in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah; they know

not and care not about his warnings ; they look for another Messiah, and will thus be more easily deceived. In the difficulties they experience in their escape from the nations, and in the emergencies which arise, it is highly probable that bold and ambitious men may blasphemously assume the sacred title, and be acknowledged by their nation.

As the expected return of Christ himself becomes general in the church, there is much reason to fear that even professed Christians may be deceived. By "*great signs and wonders*" many may be seduced. There is exceeding strength in the Saviour's language, "insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect." There is therefore need for this being insisted on. It is impossible to tell or conceive by what artifice Satan may contrive to abuse this doctrine, as he has done every other ; but Christians have their Lord's express caution, and let them see to it that it be not neglected.

There is one class of people in this country by whom these warnings are already much needed ; I mean the Southcotites. They are far prepared for the reception of a false Messiah ; and probably ere long they will receive one. In England they are numerous, and are already under the guidance of a "*false prophet*," who seems to have in some measure realized the character here predicted by our Lord, showing "*great signs and wonders*" of a certain description. Should the Lord be pleased to put these Letters into the hands of any one who believes in the existence and re-appearance of Johanna's son, let me address to him the caution, and prescribe for him the test of Jesus, in whose prophetic character he professes to believe ; "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold He is in the desert ; go not forth : behold he is *in the secret chambers* ; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Mat. xxiv. 26, 27. He is *not* the Messiah who comes otherwise than in the clouds of heaven. He is *not* to be followed or sought unto, who instead of making a bright and glorious manifestation of himself, visible to all and demonstrative of his proper character, should court the privacy of the chamber, or the retirement of the desert.

These cautions concerning false Christs and false

prophets, are farther necessary to guard against another species of imposition upon those professing their belief in the Redeemer's Speedy Return. Infidelity is not only extending with fearful rapidity, but its champions are becoming more bold in their blasphemies, and more impious in the display of their malice. Whatever can derogate from the honour of the Saviour, or which may mar the peace or endanger the safety of his saints, they eagerly improve, and with devilish ingenuity prepare devices of seduction. They are organizing systematically into Societies which scruple not at the use of any means, however monstrous, for effecting their purposes. An instance of this kind has lately been exhibited by the London Infidel Society, which is said to have lately sent two of their number to Ashton-under-line among the deluded votaries of Southcote, to assume the character of their Messiah. They were caressed until the imposture was detected. The dreadful success of deceivers as predicted by our Lord, render necessary the urging of his cautions on all who look for his appearing.

These remarks on *False Christs* may be closed by an extract which suggests the probability of another appearing in Palestine. The Drusses who at present inhabit some of the mountainous districts of Judea, are supposed to be the descendants of some of those Christian Crusaders who sought to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels. "They believe that the *Deity was incarnated* in the person of Hakem, Caliph of Egypt; and that *he will shortly appear again*. He is to come, they think from China; and to meet, fight with, and utterly destroy all his enemies at a place called the 'Black Stone.'" *Jowett's Christian Researches in the Mediterranean.* Vol. I. p. 444. Is there not much reason to fear that some Impostor may deceive them by blasphemously usurping the name of Christ, the only Incarnated One?

I proceed, however, to the consideration of those signs more immediately given by our Lord in connection with his coming. "Jerusalem," says the evangelist Luke, "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking

after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And *then* shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke xxi. 24—27. In discoursing on the parallel passage, in Matthew's gospel, you regarded the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, as only the bold figurative language of prophecy. This you considered to be evident from the statement of Luke quoted above. The evangelist, you said, in the latter clause of the verse *explained* the celestial signs to be the distress of nations on earth.

That the sun, moon, and stars, are used symbolically in Scripture is undeniable. "Thus saith the Lord, *concerning the prophets* that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths they even prepare war against him: therefore *night* shall be unto you, that ye shall not have *a vision*; and it shall be *dark* unto you that ye shall *not divine*; and the *sun* shall go down *over the prophets*, and the *day* shall be *dark over them*. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea they shall all cover their lips; for there is *no answer of God*." Micah iii. 5—7. "She that hath born seven languisheth; she hath given up the ghost; *her sun is gone down*, while it is yet day; she hath been ashamed and confounded; and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the Lord." Jer. xv. 9. These are indeed instances of figurative language concerning the heavenly host, and others there are in Scripture. But having acknowledged the use of such symbols, I am very far from admitting that this in the least militates against the view by which in any particular case the sun, moon, and stars, are to be understood in their literal sense. As signs in these luminaries is no way impossible, they may certainly occur, and if in the purpose of God it is designed they shall occur, then also may they be the subject of Scripture prophecy. If such admissions be made, and I see not how the positions can be questioned, then must we in every case inquire what is the true meaning of such declarations, and therefore what is meant by our Lord when he says, "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars."

It has indeed been generally supposed that these signs are not in the natural heavens, but that they symbolize

events which occur among the nations of the earth. This view, although I think it in opposition to the whole tenor of our Lord's language on other occasions, as well as throughout this discourse, has not been confined to those who deny the personal coming of Christ to be here predicted. A similar interpretation has been given even by the most eminent Millenarian expositors. "It is manifest," says that acute interpreter of Prophecy, Mr. Cunningham of Lainshaw, "that the signs spoken of by our Lord, are in the symbolical, and not the natural heavens; for we are informed in the subsequent part of our Lord's discourse, that during the occurrence of these signs, the world in general shall be immersed in carnal security and anxious occupation about the things of this life, which could hardly be the case if the signs described were in the natural heavens. Indeed," he adds, "these signs have never been understood in a literal sense by any person conversant in the language of sacred prophecy." *Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets*, p. 231.

It is not my present object to inquire (even if I had the means of ascertaining,) whether or not they have ever been so understood by competent judges; it shall rather be my aim to prove that they ought so to be received. This I believe to be capable of proof, and if so, some explanation may possibly be found to account for their not being so recognized. But Mr. Cunningham's supposition, that if these signs were in the natural heavens, the world could not at the time be immersed in carnal security and anxious occupation about the things of this life, can easily be admitted. In point of fact it is expressly stated that the contrary will be the case; yet that men may be so engrossed before and after the occurrence of the signs, and yet be in alarm at the precise time, is in no way inconsistent with the feelings of the unregenerate heart. Accordingly I believe that the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will itself be *as a snare* to all them that dwell on the face of the earth, while I yet believe that they will be greatly startled by the signs which immediately precede it. Conjecture in the case is indeed unnecessary; the signs whatever they may be, do arrest attention and create alarm. Deep as they may be sunk in carnal security, the passage expressly foretells at least a momentary awakening, since

it predicts “*men’s hearts failing them for fear, AND FOR LOOKING AFTER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMING ON THE EARTH.*” Luke xxi. 26. This alarm is occasioned by these very signs, as is added in the following clause of the verse; they form the reason expressed, “*for THE POWERS OF THE HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN.*” There is, therefore, *at the time when these signs are witnessed*, no such tranquillity as to render it “manifest that the signs spoken of by our Lord are in the symbolical and not the natural heavens.” But terrified as the world may be, in the first instance, Infidel Philosophy may soon find some natural cause by which to account for the fearful portents, and men may soon return to their wonted security, not again to be disturbed until the heavens open for the descent of the incarnate Judge.

But the very terms employed, appear to me necessarily to imply that the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, are signs in the natural heavens. For it is to be observed that Luke *besides these* intimates the “*distress of nations, with perplexity.*” If the signs previously mentioned were in the symbolical heavens, they would of themselves imply distress of nations, and *they also* would be “*upon the earth.*” But the evangelist states this to be something additional. The latter is not merely an explanation of the former. By the introduction of the conjunction “and,” they are shown to be perfectly distinct and different, and not explanatory the one of the other. Not only so, but the evangelist by mentioning one class of these signs to be “*on the earth,*” in contradistinction to the other, leads us to infer that both are not. “*There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations.*” The mere mention of the sun, moon, and stars, suggests their place to be in the heavens; but besides these celestial signs, there are others of a terrestrial nature. Had the one been merely a repetition of the other in unsymbolized language, the words “*upon the earth,*” in reference only to the last, would have been unnecessary, would indeed have been improper. They suppose the former *not* to be on the earth, while if they referred to the symbolical heaven they would in reality be *on* the literal earth—they would constitute the distress of nations.

This combination of celestial and terrestrial signs, Luke

places at the close of the times of the Gentiles. He does not however specify minutely whether they shall be exactly at the same time; or, if otherwise, which shall be first in order. This information is fully supplied by Matthew and Mark. The "distress of nations," spoken of by Luke, is not mentioned by them in the same form, but is introduced in terms still more expressive: "Then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Mat. xxiv. 21, 22. This is indeed "distress of nations," and is "upon the earth." Mark also gives a similar enlarged statement of unparalleled tribulation, and this, with both, seems to stand in place of Luke's "distress of nations," since it is not otherwise spoken of by either of these evangelists. In Luke, on the other hand, there is no notice of any other tribulation immediately before the coming of the Son of man, than the predicted "distress of nations with perplexity." In the narrative of all the three evangelists, the coming of Christ immediately follow these terrestrial and celestial signs; but their relative order, omitted by Luke, is stated by Matthew and Mark. We thus learn that the heavenly signs *follow* the great distress among the nations. "Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days," Matthew informs us, "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Mat. xxiv. 29. Luke intimates, as we have seen, signs both in the heavens and on the earth, without specifying particularly which shall be first; but here we are taught not only that the celestial signs *succeed* the terrestrial,—and that "immediately,"—but we are also informed of the *nature* of those signs which Luke had merely intimated shall be "in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." It is not the destruction of these great bodies, but their *obscuration*, which takes place. By what means this shall be effected, I do not now inquire, although perhaps some information on the subject, may be obtained from the word of God.

It is farther added, "the stars shall fall from heaven." This cannot possibly mean their falling to our earth.

Their greater magnitude renders this impossible. The explanation is supplied by Luke who informs us that the appearances predicted of the stars, as of the other two luminaries, are merely signs. The stars shall *seem* to fall, as the appearance of the moon will be that of *blood*. By immediate interference with the arrangement by which the solar system is at present regulated, the Lord will give *a sign* which nothing but the absolute and awful infidelity which shall then prevail, will prevent the world from recognizing. The supposition of Ben Ezra, that this will be effected by a sudden wrenching of the earth from its present polarity, does appear to present a very natural explanation of the sign, while, I think, it will satisfactorily account for many of the prophecies of celestial phenomena at the Restoration of Israel. It may indeed be said that this would not be a falling *of the stars*, but the fact would as really correspond with the language as does that concerning *the sun standing still* at the command of Joshua. From our advanced acquaintance with astronomical science, we know that the language of neither is *philosophically* correct. But the Scriptures being meant for the use of men in all ages, the historical fact is narrated in terms which are generally understood by unlearned men, as well as by those of higher attainments. But if we now know that the fact mentioned, Josh. x. 12,13. must have been occasioned by a suspension of the *earth's* diurnal motion, while yet it is called a stopping of the *sun*, so can we also believe that a sudden changing of the earth's motion may be called, what to men it would really seem, *a falling of the stars from heaven*. This one movement of the earth's motion would indeed affect the appearance of more than the stars; it would similarly affect the appearance of all the other heavenly bodies. And this seems also distinctly implied in the words "the powers of the heavens," or as stated by Mark, "the powers *in* heaven—shall be shaken."

One other fact connected with these signs, literally understood, appears farther to confirm this view of the prediction. Any interference with the movements of the earth must affect immediately the state of the sea. The regulation of the tides, it is well known, is wholly dependant on these movements, and the relations which the planets and their satellites bear to each other, and that in which they

stand to the sun. Such an interruption, then, as that which I have supposed, would produce an instantaneous impression upon the waters which cover the face of the globe. This I think is distinctly referred to by Luke, when in connection with the predicted signs, he adds, “*the sea and the waves roaring.*”

Between the powers of the heavens being shaken and the actual Coming of the Son of man, Matthew interposes a circumstance not mentioned by any of the other evangelists : “*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.*” These words may either be used to signify some sign pertaining to the Son of man,—as a sign of his coming, or something else relating to Him,—or they may be understood of the Son of man being *himself* a sign. Thus viewed, the expression would be, that after the shaking of the heavenly bodies, there shall be *another* sign, and that sign will be “*the Son of man in heaven.*” Henry thus understands the sign of “*the Son of man, himself;*” and a similar view has been given by others in more modern times. Indeed, after the various signs already noticed, which, in the sense first mentioned, were all signs of the Son of man, I can scarcely suppose that a new one of any thing like the same nature would be called “*the sign of the Son of man.*” It may therefore possibly refer to a visible display of the glorious Redeemer “*in the heavens*” before he descends to our earth ; but as the statement is so brief I say nothing more at present on the subject.

To only one single circumstance do I farther advert in relation to these celestial signs; they are “immediately *after*” the great tribulation, on which, I believe, we have already entered. This plainly implies that before the coming of Christ—before the signs by which that coming is preceded—there will be an interval, however short, of restored tranquillity. The signs cannot be “*after*” the tribulation, until the tribulation has really ceased. When the Lord shall have scourged the nations by the sword, by famines, by pestilences, and by earthquakes, there shall be a momentary respite from agitation and alarm ; and we can conceive of men refusing to see the hand of God in all that has been done, pleasing themselves perhaps with mutual treaties or with the “*new order of things,*” and indulging the hope of lengthened tranquillity, suddenly awakened from their

dream of peace by the appalling sign of the darkened heavens. Still even with "hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth," they see it not as the doing of the Lord, nor acknowledge it as the operation of his hand. Able to explain, or to imagine the proximate cause by which the wonder is produced—and having determined that any explanation supplied by "Revelation" which they reject, is inadmissible—again may they sink into all their wonted carnality, and continue, amid the tokens of impending destruction, heedless of their coming fate.

I say not that this is an exact picture of what will take place, but it is readily suggested by attention to the present increase of Philosophical Infidelity, the disrelish of every thing which has the semblance of what is called "miraculous" both within and without the church, and the late disregard or unscriptural explanation of recent occurrences in the natural and moral world, by which God seems to be preparing for those mightier displays of His power and of His indignation, which usher in the Millennial triumphs of His Son.

Mr. Faber not only supposes the signs in the sun, moon, and stars to be symbolical, but maintains a theory of their occurring at two distinct periods—the one "*in*" the great tribulation, and the other "*immediately after*" it. This view he endeavours to support by what has certainly the appearance of a disingenuous use of our Lord's words as recorded by two different evangelists. Again and again, page after page, does he speak of "those *earlier* political revolutions which," he says, "our Lord foretells as occurring *in* the days of the Jewish tribulation;"—revolutions which he affirms "will be *followed* by others which our Lord places *immediately after* the close of the Jewish tribulation"—for he confidently and repeatedly asserts that "the signs in question are to occur not only *immediately after* the tribulation, but likewise *in the days of the tribulation.*" *Sac. Cal.* Vol. 1. pp. 203, 237, 250. But how necessary so ever such a distinction may be for the general theory which Mr. Faber on this subject upholds—and for him it is really necessary, important conclusions being founded on the mistaken assumption—assuredly it has no countenance whatever from our Lord's prediction.

Not only in the gospel by Matthew, (xxiv. 29,) are the celestial signs, which Mr. Faber understands to signify “revolutions,” most distinctly placed “immediately after the tribulation of those days;” but in the parallel gospel by Mark also, (xiii. 24.) cited as his proof of those “revolutions which occur *in* the days of the Jewish tribulation,” these signs are not less explicitly declared to be “after” the great tribulation. It is indeed “*in those days;*” but in *what* days is the question. Is it *in the days of the tribulation*, as Mr. Faber affirms? No such thing. This evangelist states these signs to be “*in those days AFTER that tribulation*, and therefore gives not the shadow of countenance to the idea his words are so often cited to prove. So far from it indeed that he affirms the very contrary, expressing precisely the idea declared by Matthew, when he says the signs will be “immediately *after* the tribulation of those days.” It is truly surprising to witness with what pertinacity Mr. Faber continues to do such violence to the language of our Lord, reiterating the misinterpretation with a frequency that would be tiresome were it even true, but which must be afflictive to every one who perceives it to be utterly incorrect.* And although he uniformly understands the signs themselves as merely intimating changes among the nations, and the overturn of kingdoms, he does nothing to show that they are not rather to be understood literally of signs in the natural heavens. He does not seem to have

* We have another singular misapprehension of the language of our Lord in the view given by Mr. Faber of the rebuke addressed to Peter on his improper inquiry concerning the fate of the beloved apostle. “*When it was promised,*” he says, “to St. John, that he should tarry until the coming of the Lord; *the promise* was fulfilled, not by the Apostle’s living to the day of the *literal* Second Advent, and consequently (as the saying went erroneously abroad among the brethren,) by his exemption from the death of the body; but by his living to witness the *figurative* coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem, and to dissolve the Jewish polity, through the merely human agency of Titus and the Romans.” *Sac. Cal.* Vol. I. p. 229. Here he not only asserts in the most positive terms that “it was promised to St. John that he should tarry until the coming of the Lord,” but also that “the promise was fulfilled.” I say nothing farther on the figurative coming so strangely supported, but as an express contradiction to the above assertions, merely quote the apostle’s own statement on the subject: “*yet Jesus said NOT unto him, HE SHALL NOT DIE;* but, *If I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*” John xxi. 23.

considered it necessary either to examine minutely the text itself of any one of the gospels, or to have sought the reflective light to be obtained by careful comparison of their harmonies.

The origin of the symbolical interpretation of these signs, I am persuaded, is to be found in the interpretation given of the great event they are designed to fore-show. Denying that event to be the literal coming of the Son of man, and substituting for it mere temporal judgments either at the destruction of Jerusalem or the pre-millennial overthrow of Antichristian nations, calling it a *figurative* coming of the Son of man that is predicted, it has been conceived that the literal obscuration of the sun, and the strange discolouration of the moon, and the apparent fall of stars from heaven would be signs too stupendous for the annunciation of such an event. Nor is it, perhaps, very surprising that both opinions should not have been corrected together, and that the idea of symbolical signs should not have been immediately discarded on the real nature of the coming of Christ being perceived. But the statements on the subject are so very precise, that farther attention to the question must exhibit more clearly their proper meaning. These very signs are explicitly declared in many of the Old Testament prophecies which furnish us with descriptions of the concluding wonders of this world's history, as preparatory to the reign of the Son of God on earth.

"I beheld the earth," says Jeremiah, "and lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down *at the presence of the Lord*, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, the whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. *For this shall THE EARTH mourn, and THE HEAVENS ABOVE be black;* because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will turn back from it." **Jer. iv. 23—28.**

I cannot believe that the *want of light* in the heavens, here predicted, is merely a symbolical expression for the

distress in which the earth is involved. It is very different from the instances of a really symbolical nature formerly quoted. In the one of those cases, if we are told that to the prophets it should be *night*, we have at the same time the explanation in the fact, that they "shall not have a vision;" if to them it is to be *dark*, it is also added in illustration, that they "shall not divine." Micah iii. 5, 7. In the other instance, if of Zion it is figuratively said, "that her sun is gone down," it is evidently something not of a general but of a peculiar nature. It is not *the sun* but "*her sun*" which sets. This is farther explained by her having "given up the ghost." (Jer. xv. 9.) Very different, however, is the language in the above prediction. It is "*the heavens*" which are there spoken of; it is even "*the heavens above*." This also stands in such a connection as proves it to be the *natural* heavens of which the prophet speaks. It is contrasted with the earth, the mountains, and the hills, nay, even with "*the birds of the heavens*;" and if the one class of objects are to be understood in their usual signification, and if the natural "*heavens*" are referred to as the element of "*birds*," on what ground must we cease to understand them in the same sense when the heavens *shall have no light*—when the "*heavens above*" *shall be black*?

Nor is this a solitary instance from the prophets. The same fact is introduced again and again in a variety of forms which wholly preclude symbolical interpretation. God, by Isaiah, speaking also of the day of the Lord being at hand, says, "*I will shake THE HEAVENS, and THE EARTH shall remove out of her place*, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger," Is. xiii. 10. Here again, it is not some particular thing which may symbolically be called *its* heavens, but it is "*the heavens*" which shall be shaken, and this again in contrast with the earth, which also is to be moved out of its place or position. Farther, this great sign is more particularly stated in the same chapter: "*For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*" ver. 10. Here again it is "*the stars of heaven*" that are spoken of; the very "*constellations thereof*" are referred to; and it is "*in his going forth*" the

sun shall be darkened, language quite inapplicable to anything else than the natural luminaries named.

Very frequently indeed do such statements occur in Old Testament predictions concerning the great destruction of ungodly men at the commencement of the Millennium. Isaiah contemplating the Millennial glory when “the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord,” says, “*LIFT UP your eyes TO THE HEAVENS, and look upon the earth BENEATH*; for *the heavens* shall vanish away like smoke, and *the earth* shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner.” Is. li. 3, 6. “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake *the heavens*, and *the earth*, and *the sea*, and *the dry land*; and I will shake *all nations*, and the Desire of all nations shall come.” Here also we have “*the heavens and the earth*” shaken, including both “*the sea and the dry land*;” and these as altogether distinct from the *nations* of the earth, “*all nations*” being expressly mentioned in addition. In the epistle to the Hebrews this passage is adduced, and affirmed by the apostle to be future: “But now he *hath promised*, saying, Yet once more, I shake not *the earth* only, but also *heaven*. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we *receiving a Kingdom* which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.” Heb. xii. 26—29. Here then the very purpose of the predicted change in the heavens and the earth, is the establishment of the Kingdom which we shall receive. That it is the natural heavens and earth that are spoken of, and nothing merely symbolical, is evident from the contrast drawn: “Whose voice *then* shook the *earth*; but *now* he *hath promised*, saying, Yet once more I shake not *the earth only*.” If it was the real earth formerly, it will be so again; but “not the earth only, but *also heaven*,” implying as clearly as language could express it, something celestial in addition to what formerly took place. As the earth alone was then shaken, so now also are both earth and heaven to be so.

Once and again are the celestial phenomena introduced in connection with the Millennium in the short book of Joel: The *earth* shall quake before them; the *heavens* shall tremble; *the sun* and the *moon* shall be dark; and *the stars* shall withdraw their shining." Joel ii. 10. And in the conclusion of the same chapter is the passage formerly referred to, "I will show wonders *in the heavens and in the earth.*" Not only in the one but in the other are these wonders to be seen; nor is it that the one is explanatory of the other, but they are both "in the heavens, and in the earth." And what are these wonders? They are expressly mentioned: "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke; *the sun* shall be turned into darkness, and *the moon* into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." ver. 30, 31. Thus then have we again the celestial phenomena (once more repeated in the following chapter, Joel iii. 15,) and with these certain other signs "in the earth," namely, "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke."

But we are even furnished with more particular information concerning the celestial signs. "It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that *I will cause THE SUN TO GO DOWN AT NOON, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.*" Amos viii. 9. To the circumstance declared in this remarkable prediction, Jeremiah appears to allude in the following passage concerning the attack upon Jerusalem: "O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoah, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem; for evil appeareth *out of the north*, and great destruction. I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman. The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place. Prepare ye war against her; arise and let us go up *at noon*. Woe unto us! for *THE DAY GOETH AWAY, for the shadows of THE EVENING are stretched out.*" Jer. vi. 1—5. This will indeed be a phenomenon, that the sun shall go down at noon, and that instead of meridian brightness there shall be the shadows of the evening.

This farther illustrates another prediction by Zechariah, which embraces with remarkable distinctness some other events connected with the commencement of the Millen-

nium. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that *the light shall not be clear nor dark*; but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, *not day nor night*; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." Zech. xiv. 6, 7. It will be a day altogether peculiar, not day nor night, for, in the language of Jeremiah, "the shadows of the evening are stretched out."

The particular epoch when these celestial signs shall occur, is farther particularized in another prediction by the prophet Ezekiel. Intimately connected is the fate of Egypt with the last great scene of the present age. Interwoven with its circumstances is the winding up of the history of oppressed Israel; and to that land the Saviour cometh, riding upon a swift cloud. Dreadful bloodshed is foretold among the people, and with this stands connected the grand events which I have just been illustrating: "Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee. And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee. And *when I shall put thee out*, I will cover the heaven, and make *the stars thereof dark*; I will *cover the sun with a cloud*; and *the moon shall not give her light*. *All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee*, and set *darkness upon thy land*, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xxxii. 4--8.

Such are some of the proofs contained in Old Testament Prophecy of premillennial signs in the sun, moon, and stars. Corresponding as they do with those recorded in our Saviour's own prediction, I must again infer that the coming of the Lord which immediately succeeds the appearance of these signs, instead of being at the destruction of Jerusalem is just at the commencement of the Millennium, to which the contexts of the passages adduced clearly refer.

After the examination already made, I think I am also fairly entitled to conclude that these signs will be literal. Nothing else can at all explain the circumstances foretold, nor accord with the connection in which they occur. And why may not they be so understood? Surely there is nothing

in the facts predicted which should lead us to put a symbolical interpretation upon the language. Is there any thing unreasonable in supposing that our Lord's return will be preceded by such signs as are here described? Can any thing be too magnificent to usher in the day of Jesus' glory? Is it incredible that the laws of nature, so called, which have often been interrupted in answer to the prayer of faith, should be suspended to intimate the speedy advent of Him who is really Nature's God? No; the importance of the event is fully equal to the pomp of circumstance by which it is preceded. The beauties of the natural sun may well be shrouded in darkness, and the bright loveliness of the moon be exchanged for the ensanguined hue, before the more glorious rise of the Sun of righteousness.

But magnificent as such signs appear, and well calculated as they are, if any thing less than the grace of God could, to arrest men in the midst of their secularities and their sins, they will all prove too little to effect so desirable a result. To believers studying God's Prophetic word they will indeed appear the clear and certain indications of the Saviour's coming, to take up his abode with men, and rule in righteousness a world so long misgoverned. Those in the attitude of watching for their Lord's Return, and who give attention to His own intimations of this his purpose, will be thus prepared for his immediate appearance, although generally they be otherwise regarded. In the unscriptural dreams of men of universal peace flowing from amended institutions, he who should point to the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, as the immediate precursors of an avenging God, will probably be regarded as an idle alarmist.

The very systems of interpretation by which these signs are all referred to civil and ecclesiastical changes have completely diverted the attention even of the church from these declarations, at least as the prediction of atmospheric phenomena. And appear when they may, it is not difficult to imagine how they will be explained, on principles very different from the acknowledgement of their being miraculous attestations of Christ's near return. Who among us that looks around him with an observant eye, does not perceive the spirit already in operation by which the most stupendous works of the omnipotent God will be witnessed and accounted for, without reference to his purpose, and

without acknowledgement of his hand? Infidel Philosophy has long exercised its ingenuity in discovering natural causes, sufficient to account for Jehovah's mighty acts, without regard to himself, and has laboured by its sophistries to put discredit on the divine testimony in which they have been recorded. And in this it has been but too successful. The spirit has spread into the church; and men high in office and in influence are found frittering down the inspired narrative of Heaven's brightest interpositions in behalf of his people, by accounting for its wonders on the known laws and unchanging principles by which they affirm all matter to be regulated. And if the suspension of these in former times be referred to second causes; and if all the preceding signs given by the Saviour—and we have now reached the last in his enumeration—have all passed unobserved, can we doubt that an explanation will yet be found, which will by men be deemed satisfactory in accounting for the celestial signs specified.

I am scarcely more convinced that these signs will be witnessed—and not a doubt rests on my mind of the certainty of this—than I unhesitatingly express it as my conviction that by the infidelity of the age they will pass unappreciated, and that after all, the return of Christ will come as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth, who are not previously prepared for that event. Christ will have indeed a little flock who know his will, and who “love his appearing;” but there is much reason to fear it will be very small. It will, however, it is to be hoped, be greatly purified. As infidelity acquires the ascendancy, temptations to hypocrisy will diminish. The world’s hatred, and the ridicule which may attach to the cause and name of Christ, will separate more fully those who are his friends, although it may leave them few in number.

There is a certain intimation of this, and a degree of universal infidelity clearly intimated in the soul-searching question of the Redeemer, “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, *shall He find FAITH upon the earth?*” Although usually explained by Millenarian writers to be “faith” *in the advent of the Redeemer*, I understand the word in its usual acceptation. And the *want* of faith to a very large extent, which the question implies, is a moral sign which the aspects of society lead me to infer may be

at no great distance. Has not infidelity in the present day a more daring effrontery among all ranks than has hitherto been seen? In our own and other lands it has entered into the councils of nations, and the authority of Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, is wholly disregarded. The monster rears its crest in unrestrained audacity, where, till very recently, it would have hid its guilty head. Judging from the progress it has lately made, we may well conceive how soon infidelity may have left but few believers in lands where Christianity is still professed. Every effort is made, covertly and openly, to undermine the faith of the gospel; and under the influence of open ridicule, and of more insidious means, thousands who once had a name to live have fallen into the ranks of Christ's avowed foes, and thousands more who have not yet reached so far, seem even now to follow fast in the same dread road to ruin. These are facts which are perfectly demonstrable, and which must be obvious to the observant whose moral sensibilities have not been sadly impaired by the contaminating influence of an ungodly world. Signs, even the most stupendous, must cease in such a case to operate upon the mind the effect they are designed to produce. The power of the wonder-working God is so little thought of, that the fact of a miracle being supposed in the interpretation of a Scripture statement, is by many reckoned sufficient to stamp ridicule upon it. By *spiritual* interpretations, its meaning must be changed to suit the taste of an age which brooks not infringement upon the laws it has been pleased to assign for the Almighty's regulation. What ignorance as well as presumption is often displayed upon this subject! As if Jehovah had merely impressed upon matter and mind certain principles which he thenceforth left without controul! God's operations are ever conducted on the wisest principles; and as the ultimate end in view is his own glory and his people's good, these principles embrace all that is necessary for the accomplishment of this end, whether that be the unwonted separation of a rolling sea, or the instantaneous and total overthrow of a city's wall; the removal of a long-standing mountain, or the new creation of a fertilizing river; drowning the world with water, or raining upon it fire from heaven. With or without means, his purpose will be effected—by means sufficient in human estimation, or by

means regarded as inadequate. Defective indeed are that man's views of the character and works of God, who stumbles at a statement of his word because its reception implies a miracle performed, or as still to be accomplished—which *must* interpret figuratively the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, solely on account of the marvel's magnitude! Such a principle I impute not to you, but it characterizes too well the general views of the church.

Modern Neologists find explanations, in natural causes, as they term them, for all the wonders performed of old in behalf of God's chosen people, and the same principle may be applied to events of similar character in future times. No place for *miracles* to come, is to be found in the schemes of systematic theology, but in God's word they abound. It is not merely the men of the world that laugh to scorn all idea of God's direct interposition by miraculous manifestations of his power and of his love; the church herself in awful unbelief, rather than confess a miracle of any sort as possibly to occur before her eyes, seeks by every means to find some interpretation by which such an admission may be evaded. Pitiful display of ill-concealed want of faith! It is not in the celestial signs alone that God will give, miraculous attestations of himself in the continued regulation and controul of this world's movements, and for effecting his own gracious purposes. As in the days of former years, for the return of his ancient people from *Egypt*, *on the south*, to their promised Land, “the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea;” (Is. xi. 15,) and what will it avail that some theory of tides may be devised to furnish the requisite explanation of the wonder? A similar miracle will be wrought for their return from *the east* also, “and, with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the River [Euphrates,] and shall smite it in the seven streams [‘into seven streams,’ *Lowth*,] and make men go over dry shod;” (Is. xi. 15, 16. Zech. xi. 10, 11. Is. xix. 4—7.) and what will it matter that some newly discovered local peculiarity may afford in the estimation of an unbelieving world, sufficient explanation of the wondrous circumstance of which, it may then be affirmed, “the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria,” shall merely have *availed themselves* in returning to the Land of Palestine.

Again, God has said, “Behold I will do a *new* thing; now it shall spring forth; *shall ye not know it?* I will even make a way in the wilderness, *and rivers in the desert.* The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen;” (Is. xliii. 19, 20. xxxv. 6, 7,) but whatever honour God may receive from the inferior creation, men, in their guilty ignorance of His purpose, may transfer to others the acknowledgements due to the Great Supreme.

Indeed, although God has promised to Israel, that “according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him *marvellous things;*” (Micah vii. 15.) yet is there reason to believe that, disregarding the mighty purpose and signal interpositions of God in behalf of his ancient people, the nations will probably consider their Restoration as nothing more than the result of human ambition, for the gratification of which, favourable opportunities were embraced with success. The word of the eternal God is infinitely more sure than any event, in human view, depending merely upon the relations of men, or the alleged fixed laws of nature. Men neglectful of Scripture Prophecy, knowing not what God has promised to do, reject alike doctrines and declarations which humble human pride and exclude guilty men from that controul they seek to exercise, and are thus awfully ignorant of their own destiny.

Let those who doubt the occurrence of premillennial *miracles*, explain how “the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west; and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” Zech. xiv. 4. Let them tell how “it shall be in that day that living [or springing] waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former [or eastern] sea, and half of them toward the hinder [or western] sea; in summer and in winter shall it be.” Zech. xiv. 8. If the age of miracles be past, let them explain how it will be that in Judea “all the land *shall be turned into a plain,* from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem.” Zech. xiv. 10.

Although God has expressly foretold the fate of those who shall come up against his people, when re-established in the

land of their fathers—even remonstrating with this formidable foe, “Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?” (Ezek. xxxviii.17.) yet with awful infatuation, and in criminal ignorance of their impending fate, Gog, the chief prince of Meshach and Tubal, “Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands, and many people with thee,” will attempt the overthrow of Heaven’s preserved nation. “Thus saith the Lord God, In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel as a cloud, to cover the land; (it shall be *in the latter days,*) and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.... And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his hands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezek. xxxviii. 1—23.

The appalling and *miraculous* discomfiture of Jerusalem’s foes is strongly expressed by Isaiah: “Moreover the mul-

titude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away ; yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with *thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.* And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty : or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite : so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion." Is. xxix. 5—8.

I do not make these citations with the design of entering upon any illustration. They are clear, distinct, and remarkably minute. Yet how little are they known, and how little attention do they excite ! The particularity of prophecy, in very many cases, in regard to the times immediately before the Millennium, is indeed remarkable. It is a bright display of the wisdom of the inspiring Spirit, that predictions of such a nature could be given without their intimations being acted upon. But while the world was in a state when such warnings were at all likely to be attended to, their meaning was overlooked ; and now when their meaning is elucidated, infidelity has steeled the nations against their truth.

In the midst of the fearful desolations of that eventful day, when there shall be one wide waste of devastation, when heaven's windows shall be opened to pour upon guilty men the red-hot vials of Jehovah's wrath, we find a few saved in the very midst of the fires, glorifying the name of the Lord God of Israel, and these in the isles of the sea ; " Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest ; as with the servant, so with his master ; as with the maid, so with her mistress ; as with the buyer, so with the seller ; as with the lender, so with the borrower ; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly

emptied, and utterly spoiled : for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth andfadeth away ; the world languisheth and fadeth away ; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof ; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

"Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate : therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song ; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down ; every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying for wine in the streets ; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the glean-ing grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the Righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me ! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously ; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

"Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit ; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare : *for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.* The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cot-tage ; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it ; and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth

upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Is. xxiv. 1—23.

It is not my intention to offer any definition of the term, but it is difficult to conceive what is meant by a miracle, if in such descriptions there be nothing miraculous. If the cleaving of mountains, and the formation of rivers—if the opening a path through mighty rivers and through rolling seas—if visitations of *thunder*, and *earthquake*, and *great noise*; with *storm*, and *tempest*, and *the flame of devouring fire*, sent by God for the very purpose of destruction, be not so regarded, I require to be told what would. Those who see not the hand of God in these, are not likely to perceive it in any signs which may occur in the sun, moon, or stars. If the Scriptures declare that a time approaches when "*fear, and the pit, and the snare*, are upon the inhabitant of the earth; and it shall come to pass that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for *the windows from on high are open*, and the foundations of the earth do shake;" if these are not to be regarded as any thing more than natural events, we again require to be told what is supernatural. Is there nothing miraculous in the predicted commotion among "*the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things* that creep upon the earth, and all the *men* that are upon the face of the earth? Will men still continue refusing to see and acknowledge the providence of God when he pleads with *pestilence* and *blood*; when he shall cause an *overflowing rain* to descend, and great *hailstones, fire, and brimstone*?

Similar statements are repeatedly given by the Psalmist, as connected with, and preceding the coming of the Lord. A prayer of Israel, if I mistake not, for deliverance from their enemies, records these petitions: "*Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them; shoot out thine arrows and destroy them.*" Ps. cxliv. 5, 6.

Several psalms appear designed to celebrate the answer

to their prayer. In that which follows, very express reference is made to this, and the fulfilment of the various petitions is distinctly stated : “ In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God ; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the *earth shook* and trembled ; the foundations also of the *hills moved* and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured : coals were kindled by it. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down* : and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly ; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and *thick clouds of the skies*. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed ; *hailstones and coals of fire*. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice, *hail-stones, and coals of fire*. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ; and he shot out *lightnings*, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me, for they were too strong for me.” Ps. xviii. 6 – 17.

The following psalm perfectly corresponds : “ Thou art the God that doest wonders,” it is there declared, however men may shun making the acknowledgement, “ Thou art the God that doest wonders ; thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, *the sons of Jacob and Joseph*. Selah. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee ; they were afraid ; the *depths* also were troubled. *The clouds poured out water*; *the skies sent out a sound*; thine arrows also went abroad ; the voice of *thy thunder* was in the heaven ; the *lightnings* lightened the world ; the *earth trembled* and shook.” Ps. lxxvii. 14 – 18.

It is indeed difficult to conceive how such declarations should be so totally overlooked. But men have been so much in the habit of explaining them as wholly metaphorical, or have so long regarded them as already fulfilled, that they are seldom thought of as just about to be realized.

And fearful as will be the result, I believe they will have far advanced ere men resign their infidelity and acknowledge the hand of God to be displayed. We see already the principle in operation, and applied towards judgments such as some of those described. *The pestilence* at this moment traverses the earth with giant strides: and who looks upon it as God's visitation for sin? Such a thought seems not to enter into the minds of those most conversant with the miseries it inflicts, or who are employed in *legislating* for its arrestment and its cure. They speculate on its origin, its nature, and its effects, as if Jehovah had nothing to do in the matter. Their hopes of escape lie only in the strictness of their quarantine regulations and in their *sanatory cordons*, and in these they trust with atheistic confidence, defying the disease they so much dread. Vain hope and unfounded confidence! If God thereby designs for us a vial of wrath, the unsanctified wisdom and worldly prudence of men will not prevail to avert it. As well might Sennacherib have thought to save the Assyrian host by the formation of a trench or the erection of a rampart, when the Angel of Death received his commission for destruction.

The proper remedy is of a moral nature. The disease yields not to the specifics of physicians who think not of the end for which it is sent. The repentance and holiness of our people is the means to secure the object sought to be obtained. Without this, there is little ground to hope for escape from that pestilence which God sends forth as a punishment for sin. Unstayed by all the arts which men devise, it will progress till God in his long-suffering subject it to controul. It is a sign in its nature calculated to humble the pride of men and bring them to the acknowledgement of the Most High as he who presides over the destinies of men. If repentance and reformation follow not, we have only to anticipate the infliction of judgment after judgment, until the Lord Jesus himself be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on his impenitent foes.

In this investigation I have almost entirely confined myself to remarks of an expository nature, but I know not a subject more fitted to excite the interest of a Christian mind.

With reluctance have I often dwelt on evidence, when I would have much preferred expatiating in those rich pastures the existence of which alone I was at liberty to prove. We have little of the spirit manifested by some whose history is recorded for our imitation, if we feel not animated by the prospects which thus open on our view. Once you seemed to delight greatly in the contemplation of Millennial bliss; and why is it that since it has been proved that Christ himself shall reign in glory, and that all his saints shall partake of the honours then to be conferred, your interest in it has so much diminished? If erroneous representations have been given of the nature of that happy era, that is no reason for your retiring from the exhibition of its real character. On the contrary, if you be still satisfied that your general system of prophetic interpretation is correct, there is the more reason *for exhibiting the evidence* that Christ himself will *not* be resident on earth in Millennial times.

I cannot suppose, I do not believe, you to be indifferent about our Lord's return, although charity itself will not allow me to make a similar admission for many who assume the name of Christian. Even to some professed friends the thought of this event ministers not consolation, animates not with higher hopes. But, to the real Christian, what event ought to be so inspiring? Oh how languid that faith which joys not in a coming Redeemer! How cold that bosom which has never felt emotion in the contemplation of the glory which shall be revealed! How feeble the aspirations of him who never in faith responds the church's joyous exclamation, "Even so come, Lord Jesus. Of what pleasure and what peace do believers deprive themselves by neglect of God's prophetic word! Taking shame to myself for having so long neglected such a precious treasure, I seek to redeem the time lost. Now rejoicing in the views it unfolds, I would consider any attempt to divest me of them, except by a Scriptural refutation of the arguments on which they rest, as robbing me of a treasure inestimably dear. Amid the turmoils and tumults of ungodly men, amid the fall and crash of nations, I can contemplate the issue without dread, nay, rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. These doctrines impart consolation under present affliction, and irradiate futurity with the beams of heavenly glory. Like the cloud of separation between the Egyptians and the

Israelites, which while it frowned darkness and death upon the one, gave light and direction to the other, Prophecy while it lours destruction and desolation on the foes of the Redeemer, is bright with the visions of mercy, love, and joy, to his faithful people. It speaks to them of safety, even while it tells of a world's overthrow. The very angels who are employed in launching the thunderbolts of Jehovah's wrath, may be commissioned to bear away unscathed the saints redeemed, to meet in joy their returning Lord.

It is indeed difficult to account on any principle consistent with the duty of a Christian for the indifference manifested by many as to whether the doctrines here maintained are revealed in the word of God or not. Surely it is not unreasonable to require from them some examination of those portions of God's word which relate to the most important era of the church's history. For their own comfort they ought to examine with care whether their present views of prophecy in general, if they have really formed any, and of the time of the Saviour's advent in particular, have the foundation of that authority which is alone infallible.

It is a fearful thing, and one of the most ominous of signs, that many whom charity forbids our ranking with the world, treat this doctrine, under its every aspect, as if it were one of trivial importance. Whatever tends to their temporal aggrandisement is pursued and embraced with an eagerness and avidity which could not be surpassed even were the world in all its present forms and fashions designed to endure for aye. Thus things pertaining to the glory of God are neglected. No leisure can be afforded for the study of his word, and the mind is altogether pre-occupied with attention to the business of the world. They *strive* to think that Christ returns not yet, while they know not what himself has taught. With such, no accumulation of evidence can ever produce conviction, for it remains unexamined, and every thing which can be contrived to form an objection is embraced as a pretext for their own indifference.

Against such engrossing concern with "the cares of this life," be it remembered, the Saviour has left his special testimony. He has expressly classed it with drunkenness, as one of the ensnaring circumstances which render men unaware of his approach, when He comes in the clouds of

heaven with power and great glory. If you would be furnished with an argument against such unchristian secularity, where is one to be found so well suited for the purpose as that which our Lord himself has provided? Or if you would seek another sign that the day of the Lord is near, that it hastens greatly, could one more obvious be given than is presented in the state of men in regard to the sin thus particularly referred to? Let me urge on all this warning. The coming of the Lord will be as a thief in the night. It is the part ascribed to *scoffers*, to "scoffers in the *last days*" too, to ask, "Where is the promise of his Coming?" "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." It is the spirit of unbelief and disregard to the word of God, which lead men to suppose that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." It is the feeling and the language of the scoffer, although it has not unfrequently been ignorantly adopted by the Christian. A change, a violent change is at hand—a change more extensive by far than is contemplated by the mere politician in his Utopian dream of a world improved by ungodly men. An overthrow, a dreadful overthrow, of all who refuse allegiance to the Son of God, prepares the way for that happiness which God himself designs for a regenerated world. *That* is a happiness to be conferred and immediately administered by Christ himself, as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Let not any one then "say in his heart, my Lord delayeth His Coming." Although his own assurances on the subject have long been neglected, the cry has at length arisen upon a slumbering church, not again to be quelled, however it may be disregarded, until the eventful day when the parting heavens shall disclose the descending Judge. In this, God has not left himself without a witness. The opening cry which was at first but feebly heard, has gathered strength from the increased number of combining voices, till against its power the deafest ear can no more be shut. It has gone over Christendom with a rapidity which excites the astonishment even of those who know it to be the truth of God, and has penetrated into countries and kingdoms far beyond these bounds. It has been heard

on the banks of the Ganges, and is re-echoed from the most southern point of Africa. That voice, distinct and clear, which, sounding forth from South America, was early wafted o'er the ocean, to mingle with that of Britain's honoured sons, which rose in sweet accord, has since re-crossed the Atlantic, to the North, and now is heard in louder strains along the shores and by the lakes of the great Columbian confederation. And, to the praise of divine grace be it spoken, the preparatory note for Jesus' coming begins at length to break in upon the stillness of that false security which had settled down upon our own much favoured but greatly guilty land.

Since the first agitation of the question among us within these six years past, the prejudices of numbers have given way. Many of our Scottish pulpits in different parts of the country do now testify to the truth; and in the southern part of the kingdom, as well as in the sister island, the number of ministers who publicly proclaim the near approach of the Son of man has prodigiously increased. The hostility of many who at first stood forward in the ranks of opposition has since subsided, although for the increasing bitterness of others, we are by prophecy itself prepared. To those who already feel convinced, but who may be afraid of consequences, let me even tell for their weakness that wherever this doctrine has been faithfully preached, it has been preached with effect. The common people hear it gladly, and I know not an instance in which the minister of any charge has not thereby become more endeared to his people, who are very easily taught both to look and to long for the glorious appearance of their returning Lord.

It will however be an awful thing should any of the real friends of Jesus be found obstinately rejecting the truth of God. What bitterness would it occasion them to know that the Scriptures had largely testified to a great and important doctrine—had enforced it by every variety of consideration—and shed over it the light of a thousand harmonizing texts—and that after all they continued blind to every argument, and deaf to every entreaty!

As you would not be guilty of such a sin, and as you would be found a faithful servant,—a ruler over the Master's household, giving them meat in due season—let me implore your full consideration of the multifarious evidence

for the Speedy Personal Return of our blessed Lord. This I desire not for your sake only, but for that of those over whom God hath made you overseer, who may also by your instrumentality be prepared for their coming Lord. And in that eventful day, when the angels are sent forth to gather together *the elect*, may it not be that the "one shall be taken and the other left;" but that whether they shall have fallen asleep, or be alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord, all may be made the partakers of his glory. That God may hasten the happy time, and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, is the sincere prayer of,

Reverend Sir,
Yours in unfeigned love, &c.

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And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee KING ; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee King ; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy Last Advent, long desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for refuge to the falling rocks.

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AND
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WITH
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"*Thus saith the Lord, I am RETURNED UNTO ZION, and will DWELL IN THE MIDST OF JERUSALEM.... If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of Hosts?*"—ZECH. viii. 3, 6.

BY JAMES A. BEGG.

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1831.

P R E F A C E

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

THE personal presence of the Redeemer on earth during the Millennium was the prevailing expectation of the early Christian Church. With the progress of error, however, this doctrine also became corrupted ; and, in consequence, was at length almost entirely discarded as unscriptural. Still it has been the hope of a few in all subsequent ages, although for many centuries the attention of the Church in general has not been directed to the subject. But as the time approaches when the orthodoxy of our creed must be decided by the event, the question of its divine authority assumes a new interest, and to the Christian a more urgent call is addressed to examine the foundation on which his opinions rest. A stricter investigation of Scripture on the subject has compelled the author of the following pages to relinquish, as untenable, the sentiments he formerly entertained, and to rank himself among the number of those who are “looking for that blessed hope, and the Glorious Appearing of the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ,” as an event speedily to be realized. And having, as he trusts, obtained more correct ideas of the time and purpose

A

of the Saviour's Return, in the hope that it may be of service to others, he has been induced to endeavour to present, in a regular and connected form, part of that chain of evidence which has brought full conviction to his own mind.

Deeply important as the subject undoubtedly is, it has not, in modern times at least, obtained that consideration to which it is entitled; and most of the Magazines and Reviews, even of a religious character, which have at all adverted to the late efforts for its revival, have made ridicule their test of truth, and—often without the shadow of argument as their warrant—have poured upon its defenders unmeasured abuse. In palliation of the outrage, it is sometimes alleged to have been provoked by the tone of haughty superciliousness assumed by Millenarians. Truth does, indeed, often suffer from the indiscretions of her friends, but there can be little doubt that still more frequently are her interests injured by an implicit deference to human authority,—the overpowering influence of which, renders alike difficult and irksome any material deviation from established maxims and opinions. The latter evil has perhaps operated most banefully upon the interests of the doctrine in question, although not a few who have stood forward in its defence, have neither been overawed by that enslaving “fear of man” which “bringeth a snare,” nor provoked to bitterness by that rancorous hostility with which they have been assailed. The display by either party of a spirit of wrathfulness towards those who differ in opinion is unworthy of the cause of truth, and by alien-

ating affection must tend to the confirmation of error, on whomsoever this is justly charged.

In the following remarks, the author has stated with firmness his convictions, but it has been his sincere desire to avoid whatever has the appearance of dogmatism or arrogance—a spirit ill calculated to win converts to any truth, but which would be especially unbecoming in him on this interesting subject. The consciousness of his incapacity to treat aright so important a doctrine—the fact, however it may be accounted for, that in many of the past ages of the Church, as well as in the present day, the great proportion of pious, eminent, and faithful ministers of Christ, have been, and are opposed to the views he entertains and desires to advocate—and the remembrance that till recently he regarded these opinions as destitute of that sanction which alone can give them a claim upon our faith—all of these considerations present reasons why, in defending this doctrine, he should be willing to give to others a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear.

As intimately connected with the doctrine of our Lord's advent, a selection of Scripture passages relative to the Restoration of Israel and their future glory has been prefixed; and for the same reason, and on account of our interest in them, some passages have also been appended, in proof of the judgments which shall precede that happy time. The whole subject is thus brought before the reader, who will be better enabled to determine on its general bearing and mutual support. Conceiving this to be a subject which ad-

mits not of aid from the fancies of men, the author has confined himself exclusively to the **SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE**; and reference is made to the passages produced, that the legitimacy of their application may be more easily ascertained. The design has been to submit a *Compend of Proof*, making Scripture its own interpreter, rather than to enter elaborately into the discussion of any one point. An opportunity is thus afforded of observing how fully the doctrine of Christ's premillennial advent, and all its concomitants, harmonizes with the manifold and varied statements of Revealed Truth. To some it might have added to the strength of the argument, to have presented extracts from the Primitive Fathers. It were easy to prove that these doctrines were maintained by all orthodox Christians during the first two centuries of the Church, and *generally*, to a much later period; although then, as now, difference of opinion existed relative to certain portions of Prophecy.*

* A few extracts are given by Bishop Newton in his Dissertations on Prophecy, in the First Part of the Rev. Mr. Anderson's Apology for Millennial Doctrine in the Form in which it was entertained by the Primitive Church, in the First Volume of the Dublin Christian Herald, and in an excellent Reply to various criticisms which appeared on the course of Lectures delivered in Edinburgh, May 1828, by the Rev. Edward Irving.—For a *Vindication* of the Primitive Fathers, see the remarks on Dr. Hamilton's Work, in the appendix to a very candid and temperate Letter to the Editor of the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, by William Cunningham, Esq. of Lainshaw, published in reply to a review of his former valuable critical pamphlet on this subject.

To have done justice, however, to this part of the inquiry would have occupied more space than was consistent with the present design. Besides, if the doctrines themselves have been proved to be *Scriptural*, any auxiliary to establish their claim upon our faith is unnecessary; and if they had been found destitute of this foundation, extrinsic aid must have proved inefficient for their support.

The substance of part of the following sheets was written in the summer of 1828, during the author's residence in Edinburgh, as a reply to the first of a series of articles which at that time appeared in the *Christian Instructor*; but the communication not having been acknowledged, he conceived that it might be useful to re-arrange, correct, and enlarge it for separate publication. In prosecuting this design, it has been judged expedient, as preserving the continuity of the general argument, and for greater condensation, to throw into the form of *Notes* such of the remarks as have been retained which more particularly apply to that author. Notes have also been subjoined on such of the arguments of others as seemed to bear against those advanced. In this, no disrespect is designed towards men who may have been eminently useful by their other labours. The author feels pain in being compelled to differ from any who are entitled to respect; and especially does he regret the necessity of publicly opposing the venerable Mr. Mason, from whose writings his earliest acquaintance with Unfulfilled Prophecy was derived, and to whose occasional pulpit ministrations he has been much indebted. A conviction of imperative duty, and a fear of the injury which the interests

of truth might sustain from the omission, could alone have induced him to insert these strictures.

The author has only to add, that he had determined to publish anonymously, and should still have adhered to his resolution, but for an apprehension that it might have been construed into an unchristian fear of openly avowing his faith in any part of divine truth, when derided or opposed, —an imputation to which he would not willingly be subjected, remembering our Lord's declaration, when formerly upon the earth, “whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and *of my words*, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.” May He be pleased to bless this attempt, by rendering it useful in leading some to a more careful examination of the sublime doctrines it is designed to establish !

Paisley, March 26th, 1829.

P R E F A C E

TO
THE SECOND EDITION.

IN again presenting to the Church the Scriptural argument for the premillennial coming of the Saviour, and other doctrines with which it stands connected, the author desires to record his gratitude for the favourable reception it has obtained. He neither is nor does he wish to appear insensible to the value of the many pleasing proofs with which he has been furnished, that his humble labours have not been in vain. The readiness with which the first impression was disposed of, affords encouraging evidence of the increased attention directed to the subjects discussed; and, from its already being translated into *the German language*, he indulges the hope that his little work may yet be rendered still more extensively useful in arousing the slumbering virgins from their lethargy, that they may be prepared to meet the Coming Bridegroom.

In the present edition, a Section on the *Conversion* of Israel has been added. It is not for the purpose of *proving* that *the fact* of their future conversion is matter of divine prediction that this addition is now made. The fact *itself* is so universally admitted, that even the citation of Scripture passages for its establishment would be superfluous. But while there continues prevalent a system of interpretation by which the numerous and express predictions of Messiah's coming and continued abode on earth are declared to mean merely the conversion of God's ancient people and

the universal reception of Christianity, it may be useful to show how little necessity there is for confounding together predictions so different, or of merging them into each other—the faithfulness of God being pledged for the certainty of both, and the divine promises concerning them being sufficiently distinct, and uniformly recorded in language altogether dissimilar, but quite appropriate, and perfectly adapted for severally conveying ideas in themselves so unlike.

Besides the evidence formerly advanced for the Literal Interpretation of prophecy where *figures* are *not* introduced, all the earlier Sections are now enlarged, by the addition of arguments derived from the immediate contexts of the passages adduced. Indeed, the system of *spiritual* interpretation, as it is called, by which the *promises* (why not also the *threatenings?*) of God to “the house of Israel and to the house of Judah” are appropriated to themselves by the Gentile church, is thus shown to be not more destitute of all *direct* authority than it is palpably at variance with the language in which they are conveyed. The duty of pointing attention to these predictions becomes the more necessary, from the growing opposition manifested by many to the fact of Israel’s restoration—an opposition, which, if we mistake not, the Scriptures represent as ultimately reaching such a length that Britain herself may yet join that confederation which shall endeavour to thwart the declared purposes of the Most High.

Some of the additional Notes contain an examination of the principles advanced by Dr. Wardlaw in the last two Sermons of his recently published volume, and a few remarks on Mr. Faber’s “Sacred Calendar of Prophecy,”

which the author has only latterly perused. It was indeed, designed to have examined with greater frequency the arguments contained in the last-named work, which, though more elaborate, do not appear more solid than those advanced by others of similar views. It was, however, found impossible within the limits of subjoined notes, to follow this author through his lengthened observations on the few passages he has discussed ; while his reasonings were not deemed of sufficient importance to warrant on their account great departure from the adopted plan of the work.—The author would renew his expression of regret at being thus called to controvert the opinions of those so distinguished for talent and Christian attainments. In examining the soundness of his opinions, much is due especially to the spirit displayed by Dr. Wardlaw, and for the ready appeal he makes to the standard of truth—a spirit which, while it adds to the esteem we have long cherished, also forms a pleasing contrast to the temper which has not frequently been displayed in the discussion of this subject. The nature of the remarks made, will not, we trust, be found inconsistent with the courtesy implied in such an acknowledgement.

These and various other improvements will, it is hoped, render the “Connected View” more complete, and fit it for greater usefulness in directing attention to “the Redeemer’s Speedy Personal Return.” As the object aimed at by its publication is the promotion of more general inquiry concerning the subjects of which it treats, the price has been fixed low ; but whatever profits may arise from *this edition* will be devoted to “the London Society for promoting

Christianity among the Jews.”* The interest which every Christian ought to feel in the descendants of Abraham might of itself sufficiently justify such a preference. But on the affectionate regards of those who are “looking for and hastening unto the day of God,” this Society has peculiar claims. Several of its most valued missionaries regularly teach with fidelity the Saviour’s Speedy Coming and Glorious Reign. They have gone forth the heralds not only of the *cross*, but of the *crown* of Jesus. They at once proclaim the Saviour born of a virgin, and as coming with the clouds of heaven—as already “come in the fulness of time,” and as yet to be sent “when the Times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”—as “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,” and the Lord coming “with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire”—as having expired on Calvary’s cross, and as yet to “reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” Unfettered, in short, by the trammels of an unauthorised system of interpretation, they truly expound the Scripture Prophecies, and unfold to the faith of the inquiring Jew those truths sublime which the aspiring and rebellious reason of the Christian so often rejects, or but reluctantly receives.

PAISLEY, March 26th, 1830.

* The amount realized for that Society was £21 ; 19 ; 2. The proceeds arising from the sale of the *third* edition were intended to have been devoted to aid the funds of the *Philo-Judaean Society*; but that Society having ceased to exist, it is purposed to transfer the proceeds, when ascertained, to the *Society of the Friends of the Hebrew Nation*, which embraces the objects designed by the former. The profits of this *fourth* edition are devoted to the *London Continental Society*.

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CONNECTED VIEW,

&c.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE STUDY OF PROPHECY.

IT is painful to contemplate the inconsistencies of even pious minds concerning Divine Revelation. Many who formally assent to the truth, “*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” do in effect deny it. Some are not ashamed to assert that the rule of *Christian* conduct is contained in the *New Testament* alone; and, acting on the principle they avow, altogether neglect the Old. Yet it was this very portion of revelation which Christ enjoined the Jews to search, as testifying of Him, and which he commends to our careful consideration by his frequent quotations from it.

Convinced that such utter neglect of any part of God’s word must be criminal, others obey in form the Saviour’s injunction, while they forget its spirit. They read without seeking sufficiently to understand ; they search not for its meaning as for *hid* treasure. Thus, much of Heaven’s precious gift is regarded as of little value, and many of its unfulfilled prophecies, especially, have become in a great measure a dead letter. Indeed, the opinion had long and almost universally prevailed, that it was alike useless and impious to attempt to withdraw the veil of mystery which overhangs the revelation of events still future ; and although more correct ideas now partially obtain, exhortations to the obvious duty of prophetic inquiry are still occasionally met by the undutiful evasion, “ It is presumptuous to pry into the secrets of God.” There are, doubtless, mysteries,

the full knowledge of which is far beyond the reach of human ken, and into which it would be sinful curiously to pry. But never can presumption attach to our endeavour to know and understand what God himself has revealed, and to the investigation of which He has promised his special blessing. “*Secret things*,” we know, “belong to the Lord our God, but those which are *revealed* belong to us and to our children for ever.” Deut. xxix. 29. If, then, we would not be found chargeable with neglect of a large portion of that Book which bears the impress of its divine original—which is the record of God’s doings, and the revelation of His unfulfilled designs—it becomes us reverently to inquire, with prayerful diligence, what he has been pleased to declare, and to seek to know “what Israel ought to do.”

It is a common objection to *the Study of Prophecy*, that it is dark, and that its meaning is not designed to be understood till after its accomplishment. It is, indeed, essential to the very nature of certain prophecies, that their import should not be known to all, nor perceived by any at a glance. But it ought not to be forgotten, that while we are informed these very mysteries shall be hid from the wicked, the promise is to the *wise* that they shall understand. Dan. xii. 10. And although the fulfilment of Prophecy does effectually serve to attest the truth of Christianity, and gives a glorious display of the omniscience of God, yet the opinion that it is not designed to be at all understood till fulfilled, is refuted alike by the express declaration of Heaven, and the past experience of the Church. This is neither the only end it was designed to serve, nor the only approved use to which it has been applied. “We have,” says an inspired apostle—and examination will show that it is really the “*Prophecy of the Scripture*” concerning Christ’s future glory and the hope of believers of which Peter thus speaks, much as the passage may be misunderstood, and often misapplied as it certainly is;—“We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto *ye do well* that ye take heed, as to *a light that shineth in a dark place*, until *the day dawn*, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” 2 Pet. i. 19. And so it has ever been regarded by the saints of God in other days. It was not while in listlessness about the fulfilment of former predictions, that new

communications were vouchsafed to the beloved Daniel; but when, having “understood *by books* the number of the years” of Jerusalem’s desolation, he besought God “by prayer and supplication.” Dan. ix. 2. The Saviour reproved with much severity the Pharisees of old, because they perceived not the reality of his Messiahship by “discerning the *signs of the times;*” and, by the parable of the fig-tree, he inculcates upon his disciples the duty of watching for the indications of His Return. Mat. xvi. 3, xxiv. 32. The whole history of the Church indeed, in former ages, furnishes abundant refutation of the opinion that prophetic times and circumstances cannot be ascertained.* The Christians who dwelt in Jerusalem at the period immediately preceding its destruction, clearly saw the time of the Saviour’s prophetic warning, when, in obedience to his injunction, they escaped and fled. It was by faith in the truth of the divine prediction, and by attention to its times and circumstances, that in the awful calamities which overtook the unbelieving and devoted city, not a hair of their heads did perish. Was not the period of Daniel’s “seventy weeks” recognized by the devout and waiting Israelites who received the Saviour as their promised Messiah? Nay, is

* It is in mercy to His people, although it will add to the condemnation of the wicked, that God has given such clear and determinate intimations of “the things that are to come hereafter;” and any attempt to throw unnecessary doubt upon the certainty of the “times” revealed, calls for severe reprobation. To this charge there is reason to fear the Examiner of Mr. Irving’s Opinions, in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor for 1828, (p. 476,) has exposed himself, when, in order to strengthen his argument for the impossibility of determining the commencement of “the mighty year of God’s glory,” he fixes upon a misprint of one of the dates in our version of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. “In regard to the long period of Daniel,” there is, in reality, no reason for its being “disputed, whether we should read, with the Hebrew, 2300, or with the Septuagint, 2400 years.” Although all our *common* editions of the Septuagint have this typographical error, being printed from an edition into which it had crept, yet the Manuscript in the Vatican, from which that very edition was printed, has 2300, and not 2400. And of all the principal *Standard* editions of the Septuagint, that alone from which ours are taken has this error. Let not, then, the carelessness of men be charged upon the Most High, nor the errors of copyists on the Spirit of inspiration.—For a full statement on this subject, see “The Scheme of Prophetic Arrangement of the Rev. Edward Irving and Mr. Frere critically examined, by William Cunningham, Esq. of Lainshaw.

it not a fact recorded by History, and known to all, that the Jews, *as a nation*, did expect their Messiah at the very time of Christ's appearance in the world? and through them did not the expectation of some wonderful Personage extend to the nations around? The fact of his rejection argues nothing against the sufficiency of the prediction. More solicitous to obtain immediate deliverance from servitude to an earthly conqueror than to receive emancipation from the thraldom of Satan,—and with hearts more intent on temporal power and worldly pomp, than with desires after that holiness which is the basis of Christ's kingdom,—they beheld, in the anticipated Messiah, only the glory which is revealed, and refused to look upon, or receive as literal, the explicit predictions of his sufferings and death. By attention to the Prophetic Scriptures, we can easily see, that although they introduce more frequently, and speak more at large, of the Millennial glory, they also predict, neither seldom nor ambiguously, the humiliation of Messiah which has preceded it. His rejection was occasioned neither by a lack of evidence, nor by their ignorance of the time assigned in Prophecy for his appearance. Men may shut their eyes upon the light, but this is no proof the sun has ceased to shine.

For a length of time, however, great ignorance of the meaning and design of the Prophetic Scriptures has prevailed in the Christian Church; and even yet, the predictions concerning the glory of the Latter Day, few study with care, or seek fully to understand. By a most anomalous system of interpretation, which rests not satisfied with present accommodation and the anticipation of future fulfilment, some have imagined that all the promises of holiness and happiness and peace, under the reign of Him who is emphatically styled, "The King of Israel," mean nothing more than the presence of the Comforter with the Church since the ascension of our blessed Lord, and individual enjoyment of peace in believing. Such an idea is, indeed, entertained by few in the present day, the great proportion of Christians who have given any attention to the Prophecies believing that they predict a period of purest bliss as yet to be enjoyed upon the earth; to which, from the term of its duration, has been given the name of THE MILLENNIUM. Many, however, who not only anticipate

this glorious era as still to be realized, but who, from calculation of prophetic dates, regard it to be near at hand, are yet “slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken” concerning it. There are not a few who can trace the operation of Jehovah’s hand in the disposal of nations, and who can read the intimations of His purpose in divine predictions which have been amply verified by their minute accomplishment, who extend not the principle to other cases which seem equally to require it. While they are ready to admit, in general, the literal fulfilment of prophecy, yet, from preconceived ideas of the nature of Christ’s reign and presence, they imagine that all the predictions in which these are declared, mean only the universal reception of the gospel, in consequence of the plentiful effusion of the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Much of the opposition which has been made to the doctrine of the glorious personal reign of Messiah on earth, is perhaps to be attributed to the too frequent neglect of the light shed upon Unfulfilled Prophecy, by the addresses of our Lord, and the writings of his apostles. By availing ourselves of the aid to be derived from a careful comparison of scripture with scripture, a more accurate conception may be obtained of the nature and peculiar blessings of that happy era.

There is, however, an intimate connection between the predictions of the Redeemer’s Millennial reign and the promises given to Israel; and as those of the latter class are by many as little understood as those of the former, it may be proper, before entering upon the consideration of that doctrine, first to point attention to some of the Scripture declarations concerning Abraham’s race, classified under distinct heads. So completely blended, indeed, are these promises with all that is predicted of the Millennial age, as to render surprising the ignorance and unbelief displayed on this subject, by many not otherwise unacquainted with Scripture truth.

SECTION II.

THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL.

THE distinguishing goodness of God has been illustriously displayed in his dealings with the children of Abraham. From the time when He appeared to the patriarch in “Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,” down through the long lapse of ages which have since intervened, the history of this people beautifully exemplifies the doctrine of a special providence, and places in the most attractive light the long-suffering and sovereign mercy of God. It is a record of human depravity, displaying Israel’s deep forgetfulness of the way in which they were continually led, and tells of their invincible ingratitude to God for his abundant goodness and many wonderful interpositions in their favour, and in giving into their hands nations greater and stronger than they. Throughout, it is one continued display of Heaven’s love and man’s rebellion—of the most signal manifestations of divine interference in their behalf, followed by the most criminal departure from their gracious Deliverer.

In studying the annals of Israel, we see that although their perversity of disposition and untowardness of character often call forth the chastisements of Heaven, still the loving-kindness of the Lord is not withdrawn, and renewedly is his favour manifested towards them. If He takes vengeance on their devices, it is still in measure, and by his love he again woos them to himself. Various kinds and degrees of punishment have at different periods been meted out to them, for their awful apostasies from the living and true God ; but their last and longest and most severe affliction has been that which followed their arrival at the summit of rebellion, in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, and which they still continue to endure. But even from the guilt of this, Prophecy declares, they will yet be cleansed—being washed in the blood they so wantonly shed. Although, in His righteous displeasure, the Lord has long left them to wander in the vain imagination of their own hearts, he has not forsaken them altogether. They shall yet be converted and healed ; they shall yet be restored to purity and peace, to holiness and happiness. Then shall they see and acknowledge the enormity of their sin in hav-

ing "denied the Holy One and the Just," and in having "killed the Prince of Life." "I will cleanse them," says the Lord, "from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me." Jer. xxxiii. 8. "Neither will I hide my face *any more* from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xxxix. 29. This conversion is, therefore, to be followed by no future apostasy; and, accordingly, it is here said, "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God, *from that day and forward.*" ver. 22. "And I will give you the land of Israel; and they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abominations thereof, from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Ezek. xi. 17—20. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

This conversion of Israel is secured in covenant: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.... This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer. xxxi. 31—33. "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put

my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jer. xxxii. 38—40. "In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Jer. l. 4, 5. "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Is. iv. 3, 4. Their mourning shall at once be general and particular. The promise of the Redeemer is, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, [where, on the death of the good king Josiah, all Judah and Jerusalem made great lamentation. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25.] And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. xii. 10—14. xiii. 1. Their *national* conversion will be sudden and general, when it takes place. But as many have already been converted to the faith of the gospel, so individual conversion we trust shall yet be greatly increased. But of the unbelieving Israelites, it is not to be concealed, Prophecy foretells great future destruction as still awaiting them. In the appointed time, however, God's gracious promise will be fulfilled;—

"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." Zech. iii. 9. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and *such as are escaped* of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them: but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God."* Is. x. 20, 21. "Neither shall they defile themselves *any more* with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God." Ezek. xxxvii. 23. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Is. xxvi. 1—4. The 12th chapter of Isaiah is a similar song of joy and salvation, prepared to be sung by them at the same time: "And *in that day* [in the day spoken of in the concluding verse of the preceding chapter, when "there shall be an high-way for the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the Land of

* Although in these precious spiritual privileges, Christians, as pertaining to the spiritual Israel, have an interest, yet are the promises given directly to the literal Israel, whose restoration to their own land is indeed the principal theme of most of the predictions from which we have quoted. That, however, being the subject of the following Section, we have wholly abstained from introducing it in this, although from the intimate connection with which both are predicted, the quotations are often made at the expense of an unhappy rending from the context—a feature which characterizes more or less nearly all the earlier Sections of the work. Our design, of concentrating in so limited a space as much as possible of the direct Scriptural Evidence bearing immediately upon the particular doctrines discussed, has rendered this unavoidable; but, except in the present Section, we have always studied to obviate the evils which would result from forming a judgment on mere detached fragments, (a mode by which, alas! the word of God is often grievously perverted.) by adducing such parts as are calculated to show the general bearing of the whole. Still we would entreat it as a favour, while we would press it as a duty, that the reader study with care the contexts of all the passages referred to.

Egypt,"]—And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel."* "I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?....Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the *natural* branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree? Rom. xi. 11—24.

Although we learn from the prophetic scriptures, that their national conversion will be preceded by great and important events, still we trust it is to be realized at no distant day. Those strong prejudices against Jesus of

* Much of the book of Psalms also, is the inspired matter of Israel's praise, containing the most decided references to the period of their Conversion and Restoration. Obviously, a large portion of these songs are not designed to celebrate *past* events, relative to David or any other individual, but are rather prophetic compositions applicable to Israel as a nation, and relative to future times, as is in general obvious from the internal evidence they contain. By attending to this fact, much of the obscurity so skilfully thrown around them by *Expositors* instantly vanishes, and their beautiful significance becomes apparent. Do not the systematic perversions of the divine word by Commentators too often justify the comparison, aptly made, of their being "spectacles which, instead of aiding an imperfect vision, create a vitiated one?"

Nazareth, which formerly prevented, almost universally, their examination of the evidence for the truth of Christianity, are passing rapidly away ; and the Hebrew New Testament is now diligently perused by multitudes, with candour. From the numerous instances in which their inquiries have been followed by a perception of its heavenly origin and inestimable value, we look forward to the time, as near at hand, when the love of God shall be more generally shed abroad in their hearts, preparing them for the joyful welcome of the Saviour, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Mat. xxiii. 39. Then the harp so long unstrung, or only waked to breathe forth Israel’s plaint, shall again be attuned to the heavenly melody of the Redeemer’s praise—infidelity shall give place to a lively faith—and instead of their proverbial covetousness, “Holiness unto the Lord” shall be inscribed on all their gains.

SECTION III.

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL TO PALESTINE.

IN all the prophecies of *spiritual* blessings given to Israel, believing Gentiles, as belonging to the *spiritual Israel*, have an interest. This privilege is not, however, obtained by any *transference* having been made of these promises from Israel to the Gentile church. But the literal Israel being the “good olive tree,” of which “some of the branches are broken off,” believing Gentiles, as branches, are “grafted in *among* them; and *with* them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree”—the Israelites on their conversion being “grafted into *their own* olive tree.” (Rom. xi. 17—24.) On this ground the members of the Gentile church, though not directly addressed, are entitled to take to themselves the consolation of those promises of *spiritual* enjoyments contained in the preceding Section. But there are other promises given to God’s ancient people, peculiar to themselves, and which, from their very nature, can by no means be applied to any Gentile race. For example, to *return* from the utmost parts of earth, can belong only to those who

have formerly been *removed thither*, which a “return” implies—there can be no *gathering* from among different and distant nations, except of those who are previously *scattered* into them—and those only can be brought to the *land of their fathers* who are the descendants of its former inhabitants. These are, however, some of the privileges promised to Israel, and of which attempts have been made, either altogether to deprive them, or, by changing the nature of the blessings promised, to render their interest in them very equivocal. When such efforts are made, by an unauthorised appropriation, to claim as ours, promises which never were given to any Gentile people, and which never can be realized in their favour, it becomes an imperative duty to vindicate the purpose and promise of God towards the objects of His special and sovereign goodness, by showing that the only legitimate, nay the only *possible* application which can be made of such predictions, is to the lineal descendants of faithful Abraham.

Before Israel was at all admitted to the promised land, Moses gave them a prophetic narrative, or prospective history of all that should befall them—the blessings the Lord should bestow—their future apostasy—the captivity of themselves and of their king—the destruction of their city—the unparalleled sufferings to which they should be exposed—and their dispersion into all nations. Deut. xxviii. xxix. And having thus predicted with fearful minuteness, the calamities by which they have since been overtaken for their sins, as the inspired servant of God he left them the gracious assurance that their wanderings and misery should ultimately terminate, by their being re-admitted to the favour of God and restored to the future possession of their land : “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul ; that *then* the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return, and *gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee*. If any of thine be

driven out into the *utmost parts* of heaven, *from thence* will the Lord thy God *gather thee*, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God *will bring thee into THE LAND WHICH THY FATHERS POSSESSED*, *and THOU shalt possess it*; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." Deut. xxx. 1—5.

Of the correctness of the application of *this* promise to God's ancient people, there can be no doubt. And if so, what reason can be assigned why such a pledge of the love and faithfulness of God should not be literally received? It is recorded with all that simplicity of language which characterizes the preceding chapters, the judgments detailed in which have been inflicted with the utmost minuteness. The prediction is most extensive. It embraces the whole period of Israel's history till the present and future times—as the verses quoted, (which form its conclusion,) evidently refer to their *final* restoration. The Babylonish captivity is not however overlooked. It is foretold in a preceding part of this remarkable prophetic narrative in terms sufficiently distinctive: "The Lord shall bring thee, and *thy king* which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known." (xxviii. 36.) This then clearly refers to that captivity when, "in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it; and the Lord gave Jehoiakim *king of Judah* *into his hand*."—"Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, *to carry him to Babylon*."—"And he carried away *all Jerusalem*, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths; none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land." Dan. i. 1, 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. 2 Kings xxiv. 14. This then was the captivity to which Israel with their "*king*" were to be subjected. This part of the prediction had at that time its complete fulfilment, while it cannot at all apply to the captivity which afterwards followed their overthrow by the Romans—for they had then *no king* to be carried captive.

But we have also another distinctive mark by which the prediction in the above verse is fixed to the Babylonish captivity, and by which it is also rendered inapplicable to

that which they afterwards suffered. They, together with their king, were at this time to be carried only into "*a nation*," while the restoration promised in the conclusion of the prediction must refer to their subsequent *dispersion*, which is afterwards predicted. *It* is a restoration "from ALL *the nations*," "from the *utmost* parts of heaven." (xxx. 3, 4.) Besides having foretold their being carried captive with their king into *one* nation, the prophet had accordingly declared that "the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." (xxviii. 64.) There is no mention of their king as participating in this wide dispersion,—an omission which exactly corresponds with the circumstances attending that captivity which followed their overthrow by the Romans. They had then *no* king, and it was *not till then* that they were dispersed "among all people." The Romans also are evidently the scourge described. They are strikingly characterized by Moses to his brethren, as "a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young." (xxviii. 49, 50.) An account of the aggravated horrors of siege to which the Jews were subjected by them, forms part of the inspired detail, including even the mention of the revolting fact of delicate mothers eating their own children.—Both captivities are, therefore, predicted; and it is "*when ALL these things*" are come upon them, and when they shall call them "to mind, *among ALL the nations* whither they have been scattered," that they are to be restored. This therefore is a prediction not merely of their restoration from Babylon, although that is expressly included, but clearly is the restoration succeeding their last and greatest captivity, and from which they yet remain to be rescued.

It is instructive to attend to such distinctive marks, given relative to events of so similar a nature. Such an exact fulfilment of the threatened curse, should surely teach us in what manner the promised blessings are to be received; and as the judgment of dispersion, with all its attendant miseries, has been literally fulfilled, can we doubt that their restoration will be equally so? It is added, that after this return to the land of their fathers, the Lord "will do thee good, and multiply thee ABOVE thy fathers"—a promise

which, while it cannot at all apply to their return from Babylon, perfectly corresponds with other prophecies concerning their future restoration.

Were there no other prediction in the inspired volume from which the literal restoration of Israel could be proved, this alone ought to be regarded as sufficient to decide the question. In the estimation of *faith*, it will weigh against a thousand speculations of erring reason about the expediency, and utility, and necessity, of such a thing. Ah! there is surely something greatly wrong, when, ere the declared purposes of God can be believed, Inspiration must be arraigned at Reason's bar, and the wisdom and utility and certainty of Heaven's decrees must be submitted to her decisions!

But clearly and distinctly as Moses thus foretells Israel's happy restoration, his is no solitary prediction. On the contrary, if there be a single fact to which ALL the prophets have borne testimony—from the time of Moses, and before his day, down to the incarnation of the “Prophet like unto Moses,” and beyond His stay on earth, even till after Patmos isle had received his most-loved and longest-surviving apostle—that attested fact is, Israel's future restoration to Palestine. “For thus saith the Lord,” by the prophet Jeremiah, “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, *I will bring them [to Zion] from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth,* and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping and with supplications will I lead them.” Jer. xxxi. 7—9. That this promise is not to the *church*, but to the literal Israel, is obvious from its also including other blessings, which relate exclusively to the land of Palestine: “Thou shalt yet *plant vines* upon the mountains of *Samarria*; the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things.” ver. 5. Besides proving that the only application of such passages is to the house of Israel; it is also necessary, however, that attention be given to the time to which they relate. Those who deny any *future* restoration, assert of all such predictions, that they were fulfilled

in the return of the Jews to Babylon, if it should be found impossible (even with the aid of a most convenient system of interpretation) to transfer them to the church. The restoration from Babylon was indeed divinely predicted also, as we have already remarked, but in the present selection of passages, none are inserted except such as are, from their context, evidently future. And such is the case in the prediction above quoted; for when this restoration is enjoyed, “they shall not sorrow *any more* at all.” ver. 11. But, since their return from Babylon, they have had more cause to “sorrow” than they ever had before. They are now more widely scattered, and more cruelly dealt with, than while under the power and within the dominions of Nebuchadnezzar; and the only captivity of Israel since that period, is that from which they are not yet recovered. And must their restoration be considered less real, because it is future? The Lord will undoubtedly perform this His promise in their favour, and “gather them from the coasts of the earth.” Nor can this restoration be confounded with their *conversion*, which is here predicted as an accompaniment. In coming ‘from the coasts of the earth, “they shall come,” saith the Lord, “with weeping; and with supplications will I lead them.”’ ver. 9.

Ezekiel records a similar prophecy: “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of *the countries* where ye have been scattered, and *I will give you the land of Israel.*” Ezek. xi. 17. To the same period, obviously, does this promise refer. It is the pledge of recovery, not from *one* land alone, as was that from Babylon, but of their rescue from “*the countries*” into which they have latterly “been scattered.” And those who are so desirous of investing the Gentile church with the various promises given to Israel, will do well to observe how this is secured to them. Addressing the Hebrew prophet, the Lord calls those to be thus gathered, “*thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred,*” whom He had “cast far off among the heathen.” ver. 15, 16. Nor is *this* to be explained as predicting merely their conversion, which the Lord immediately promises in addition; “I will put a *new spirit* within you, and will take the stony heart

out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." ver. 19.

Again, "Thus saith the Lord God," by the same prophet, "Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and bring them out, as a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them *out of all places where they have been scattered* in the cloudy and dark day; and I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, *and will bring them to THEIR OWN land*, and feed them upon the *mountains of Israel*, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel, shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed, upon the mountains of Israel." Ezek. xxxiv. 11—14. These sheep, it is added, "are *men*," and "they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord." ver. 31, 30. That they are the literal Israel is also evident, as they are to be gathered "*from the countries* and brought to *their own land*," to the "*mountains of Israel*," and to "*all the inhabited places of the country*." ver. 13, 14. This restoration has not yet been enjoyed, for, after it "*they shall no more be a prey to the heathen*," neither bear the shame of the heathen *any more*," but they shall dwell safely, and *none shall make them afraid*." ver. 28—31.

Once more, by the same prophet, "Thus saith the Lord God, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name....when I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them, in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but *I have gathered them UNTO THEIR OWN LAND, and have left none of them any more there*. Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xxxix. 25—29. This clearly refers to the literal "*Israel*," as it was they who "*went into captivity for their iniquity*," and who were "*led into captivity among the heathen*;" and it is they only who remain yet to be

gathered “out of their *enemies’ lands*....unto their *own land*.” Neither is this the restoration from Babylon, for *all Israel* did not then return; but, when this promise is fulfilled, there is “left *none* of them *any more* there.” It is also immediately subsequent to Israel’s triumph over Gog, when they shall “spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord.” ver. 10. It is, consequently, still future; which is farther obvious from the Lord’s gracious assurance, “neither will I hide my face *any more* from them.”

If these predictions do not prove the future restoration of the literal Israel to the land of their fathers, it may certainly be asked, In what language *could* such a promise be made, that would not be equally liable to be misapplied, perverted, or discredited? We may as well deny the literal *conversion* as the literal restoration of Israel—most of the passages which assure us of the one, predicting also the other. If it was not a figurative dispersion they suffered, neither will it be a figurative restoration they shall enjoy. And if dispersion was a part of the punishment of their national transgression, so also will restoration be obtained when forgiven of the Lord, and will be connected with their national repentance. And how wonderfully has the Lord preserved the Jews for this display of His sovereignty and grace! Although scattered into every nation of Europe,—nay, attracted into every country under heaven, into which commerce has been introduced—and possessed, as many of them are, of immense wealth—they have not been allowed to become the proprietors of any soil. They have no inheritance in other lands, and they have always cherished a passionate desire to return to their own. Throughout their long captivity, they have thus been kept unsubjected to the influence of other local attachments, and in a state of constant readiness, for migration; and recent movements among them render it highly probable that the time of their general departure is at hand. By the dispensations of His providence, the Lord is manifestly preparing the way for their return. In the plenitude of their uncontrolled power, earthly potentates may indeed combine, and, with a view to perpetuate their systems of iniquity, may create kingdoms at will, allot to them the territories they shall possess,

and appoint the kings by whom they shall be governed,* without asking counsel of the Lord, or regulating their decisions by His “sure decree.” In all their calculations, Israel may not be reckoned; in their disposal of territory, no portion may be assigned for *their* inheritance. But the God of Jacob “has purposed, and who shall disannul it?” “Zion shall be redeemed with judgments, and her converts with righteousness.” “But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.”† Is. i. 27. Ezek. xxxvi. 8. “Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish.” Is. xli. 8—11.

* Written immediately after the annunciation of the allied Sovereigns of Europe having appointed Prince Leopold to the throne of Greece, and before that prince had tendered his resignation.

† In the Jewish Expositor for January 1830, (a monthly periodical deserving of more general circulation, being entirely devoted to the best interests of Israel, and containing regularly the correspondence of the Jewish Missionaries,) there is an extract of a letter from Mr. Wolff, dated Cyprus, July 15, containing an account of 100 Jews, from Constantinople, having arrived at Jaffa, (the Scripture Joppa,) while Mr. W. was there, on their way to Jerusalem. It is added, “A friend, on whose judgment and veracity equal confidence may be placed, writing from Constantinople, more recently, says that when he first arrived he heard of a *great number of ships*, hired by the Jews to convey them to Jerusalem. He found they were going in expectation of the near coming of their Messiah. He adds, that *thousands of families* were preparing to embark from all quarters.” This statement was confirmed by another friend, writing from the south of Europe, under date, November 28. What influence the later movements in Poland, in which the Jews, immensely numerous in that country, have taken the most lively interest, may exercise upon the destinies of Israel it is yet impossible to foresee. But that they may lead to important results, as affecting that people, is highly probable.

SECTION IV.

RESTORATION OF THE KINGDOMS BOTH OF ISRAEL
AND JUDAH.

IN the preceding Section, on the return of God's ancient people to the Land of Promise, we have endeavoured to prove, from the contexts of the passages adduced, that their only legitimate application is to the literal house of Israel; and that the restoration they predict is yet future. Distinct as these passages are, in proof of the positions maintained, those now to be cited are more obviously so, as the class of predictions they contain are still less capable of being alienated from their proper objects. Their accommodation to the Gentile church is still less admissible, because, from the distinctions they make, it is rendered more apparent that they only relate to the descendants of Abraham. By express mention of the kingdom of Israel or the Ten Tribes, distinguished from that of Judah or the Two Tribes,* their reference to the literal Israel is put beyond question; while the fact that the Ten Tribes have received *no* general restoration since these predictions were given, renders it equally manifest that their promised return to the Holy Land is still future. Under Ezra, a small portion of the Israelites returned from Babylon to their own land, when liberated by Cyrus. But those who went up were in all only about fifty thousand, (including above seven thousand servants, Ezra ii. 64, 65,) not a fifth of the whole even of the kingdom of Judah, namely the Two Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, to which tribes they appear almost exclusively, if not indeed entirely, to have belonged. (Ezra i. 6. iii. 9. iv. 1, 12.) while we are expressly told that "the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria," when the Israelites were carried into Assyria, still continued to occupy them. (Ezra iv. 10.) For at the time Samaria was taken by Shalmanezer, he "carried *Israel* [the Ten Tribes] away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by

* Attention is forcibly called to this distinction in certain predictions which relate to the different circumstances in which they have so long been placed,—Israel being outcast, and Judah dispersed.

the river of Gozan ; and in the cities of the Medes.... And the king of Assyria *brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim,* and placed them in the cities of Samaria *instead of the children of Israel;* and they possessed Samaria and dwelt in the cities thereof.” 2 Kings xvii. 6, 24. Of these captive Israelites, individuals would doubtless embrace opportunities of returning, but it is known with certainty that no general restoration of them has since taken place. The testimony of History proves, that, both in the first and fifth centuries of the Christian era, they were still in or near the places of their original settlement; but latterly they have disappeared from observation, and various conjectures are now entertained concerning their present situation and circumstances.* The Lord will, however, in His own time, bring them from their hiding place, as in the following predictions they are clearly distinguished from the kingdom of Judah, with whom they are to be restored and afterwards re-united.

With justice, therefore, in arguing the question, we might have assumed that those predictions which declare their combined restoration, “even *the whole house of Israel,*” still remain unaccomplished. In addition to the evidence of this palpable fact, we will, however, as in the preceding Section, endeavour to prove from the several contexts themselves that this restoration has not yet been obtained.

“For, lo ! the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people, *Israel and Judah,* saith the Lord ; and I will cause them to return to the

* The features and customs of the American Indians have led many to believe them to be of Jewish extraction ; and it was the opinion of Sir William Penn, that they are no other than the remnant of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Various authors have since adopted the same view ; and a work entitled “The Hope of Israel,” has lately been published, endeavouring to establish the fact. The work itself we have not yet seen ; but if the numerous striking coincidences mentioned in its Introduction (as quoted in the Jewish Expositor for January, 1830) have been satisfactorily ascertained, they may certainly be considered as forming “Presumptive Evidence that the Aborigines of the Western Hemisphere are descended from the Ten Missing Tribes of Israel.”—Among those who entertain a different opinion of their place of concealment, it may not be uninteresting to mention, are two converted Jews, who, unconnected with any Society, sailed from Greenock in September (1830) for Calcutta, with the design of seeking the Ten Tribes in Central India.

land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Jer. xxx. 3. The inspired prophet immediately adds, "and these are the words which the Lord spake concerning *Israel* and concerning *Judah*." ver. 4. It might also be supposed, from this renewed specification, that the repetition was designed to prevent the possibility of any alienation of the consolations the prophecy presents, by the misapplication of it to the Gentile church. Their return being to the same "land" which the Lord gave to "their fathers," the restoration must be literal. Nor is there any necessity to destroy the meaning of language, by calling this a prediction of their conversion, (a misnomer at which we have sometimes occasion to marvel,) that being also distinctly foretold : "They shall serve the Lord their God and **THE BELOVED,*** *their King*, whom I will raise up unto them." ver. 9. This, therefore, is an unaccomplished prediction, as neither the house of Israel nor that of Judah yet "serve" The Beloved—the King they shall ultimately acknowledge and obey.

The same prophet again records a similar prediction : "In those days, *the house of Judah* shall walk with *the house of Israel*, and they shall come *together* out of the land of the north, to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." Jer. iii. 18. If then, "the land given for an inheritance" to their fathers was the land of Palestine, their return must be to it. This will be "in those days" when "they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it." ver. 17. This, however, it is scarcely necessary to say, is one of the promises concerning the Millennial Day; which is farther evident from its being at the time of their *last* conversion: "neither shall they walk *any more* after the imagination of their evil heart." ver. 17.

Although not named, both kingdoms are expressly in-

* In an admirable letter to the Rev. Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane, by Henry Drummond, Esq. in Defence of the Students of Prophecy," the proper meaning of the name "David," used in our Translation of this and other prophecies concerning the Saviour, is well explained. Signifying, as it does, "The Beloved," (a title applied to the Saviour in the New Testament, Eph. i. 6.) for the sake of perspicuity, we have, in the above quotation, and in others of a similar nature, made the substitution.

cluded in the restoration declared in the following prediction by the prophet Zephaniah; “Behold at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will *save her that halteth*, AND [also] *gather her* that was *driven out*; and I will get *them* [both] praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.” Zeph. iii. 19, 20. Israel is “*her that halteth*,” and Judah “*her that was driven out*;” but the shame of *both*, it is here foretold, shall cease together. Each of the two classes is first specified singly, and then they are spoken of conjointly, in the *plural* number; “I will get *them* praise and fame in every land.” The one is to be *saved*, the other to be *gathered*; and “the *captivity*” of both is to be turned away. The time to which the prophecy relates is, when those who have afflicted Israel shall be *undone*; and the futurity of its fulfilment may also be ascertained from the promise, that then “the *remnant* of Israel shall *not* do iniquity,” and they shall “*not* see evil *any more*.” ver. 13, 15.

Isaiah also bears explicit testimony to the same truth: “and it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand the *second* time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the *outcasts of Israel*, and gather together the *dispersed of Judah* from the four corners of the earth,” Is. xi. 10—12. This is not the *Gentile church*, for in the preceding verse, “the *Gentiles*” are expressly mentioned as quite distinct both from “the *outcasts of Israel*,” and from “the *dispersed of Judah*.” Could any thing be more obvious than that this promise is to both kingdoms of Israel,” distinct from the *church*, by the very names of the Gentile nations, whence they are to be rescued being thus introduced? And it is farther to be observed, that, as no such restoration has hitherto been enjoyed, and as it has only been by their last captivity that Judah has been dispersed into “the four corners of the earth,” this gathering

cannot yet have taken place. That it refers to the period of the Millennium, the whole context indeed distinctly proves, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." ver. 9. Nor is it to be confounded with their conversion, which is here again also foretold : "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; *He also is become my salvation.*" (xii. 2.)

The restoration of both Israel and Judah, and their subsequent union, were symbolically represented to the prophet Ezekiel. He was commanded to take "one stick and write upon it, *For Judah*, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick and write upon it, *For Joseph*, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions." These he was commanded to join "one to another *into one stick.*" This he is informed, represents the union of the tribes of Israel with those of Judah ; and it is added by the Lord, "Behold I will *take* the children of Israel *from among* the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and *bring them into their own land*; and I will make them one nation in the land *upon the mountains of Israel*, and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.... And THE BELOVED, my servant, shall be King over them.... and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, *wherein your fathers have dwelt*; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children for ever; and my servant, THE BELOVED, shall be their Prince for ever." Ezek. xxxvii. 21—25. When this promise receives its accomplishment, Israel and Judah shall be made "one nation in the land, upon *the mountains of Israel*," and shall dwell in the land wherein *their fathers* have dwelt. This sufficiently indicates its application to the literal Israel ; and that it refers to no past time is evident from its being followed by peace never again to be interrupted, either by external foes or by jealousies and divisions amongst themselves, and from both acknowledging the sovereignty of "one King," even "The Beloved," who "shall be their Prince for ever." Neither Israel nor Judah, *as nations*, have yet submitted to Him in any sense ; but this prediction foretells their conversion and restoration

and submission to the Messiah, as to follow their being gathered from among the heathen, and united into one nation. They shall no more thenceforth be cursed with dispersion, but being brought “*into their own land....they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children, for ever;*” for the Lord “will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an *everlasting covenant.*” Does all this mean merely their conversion ? That is promised in addition : “They shall *also* walk in my judgments, and *observe my statutes,* and do them.” ver. 24.

A prediction precisely similar to that already quoted from Zephaniah, is given by the prophet Micah : “In that day, saith the Lord, will I *assemble her that halteth,* and I will *gather her that is driven out,* and her that I have afflicted ; and I will make her that halted *a remnant,* and her that was cast far off *a strong nation;* and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth even for ever.” Micah iv. 6, 7. Although neither is expressly mentioned, the conditions of Israel and Judah are here also clearly referred to, the former as halting, the latter as driven out. They are not united but perfectly distinct, each possessing its peculiar characteristic, for while the one is only “*a remnant,*” the other is “*a strong nation.*” These are to be “*gathered,*” implying their previous *dispersion;* those require merely to be *assembled;* and both are to submit to the Saviour’s sceptre ;—“the Lord shall reign over *them.*” This proves its futurity, which is farther evident from the perpetuity of their subjection to Messiah’s sway. It shall never cease, from the time referred to—“from *henceforth even for ever.*” This reign commences with the Millennium, when “nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” ver. 3. It will be in the land of Palestine, “in Mount Zion;” and will be preceded by their conversion : “and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever.” ver. 5.

Such predictions amply prove the future restoration of both the Ten Tribes and the Two Tribes ; and, if we mistake not, they also point out their present separate existence. It is the opinion of many who advocate the literal restoration of the “whole house of Israel,” that the remnant of the Ten Tribes have become incorporated with dispersed

Judah. The language of these predictions leads us to a different conclusion. They seem to intimate that the predicted union has not yet taken place. The situations of the two kingdoms previous to their restoration are represented differently—Judah, when particularized, being generally spoken of as “dispersed” and “scattered;” Israel, never. Judah is frequently said to be “gathered;” while Israel, in contrast, is said to be “saved,” and “assembled,” and “*brought again.*” Israel are “outcasts,” and only a “remnant;” Judah, though “cast far off,” is still “a strong nation.” Their restoration appears to take place *while* these are the peculiarities of their situations, and their union to be effected only at that time. In the very act of returning to their own land, they appear to meet, and although they come “together” from the north country, their being together seems something *new*. It is to be viewed as an occurrence which just then takes place, rather than as an evidence of their being already blended with each other. Their union into one nation, as represented by the junction of the two sticks, is explained to mean their *being gathered* and brought to their own land—a symbol which at least loses much of its significance by supposing them to have become *already* one, and their union as effected hundreds of years *before* their return to that land. In Hosea, (i. 10) concerning Israel we are told, that “it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” This refers to the period of their future conversion; and observe what follows, “*THEN shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel BE gathered together,* and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” ver. 11. The time of their *being gathered* together, thus appears to be when they shall appoint over them one head,—“*THEN,*” and not *before.* In Zechariah both are expressly mentioned, and in such terms as appear to imply their being in a distinct state, even after their return from captivity: “When I have bent *Judah* for me, [as a bow,] filled the bow with *Ephraim,*” &c. Zech. ix. 13. We stop not to inquire particularly into the meaning of the prophecy, but simply observe that the one being represented as a bow, while the other is the arrow with which it is

filled, implies a correspondence in the different purposes for which they shall be respectively employed by the Lord immediately before the Millennium, thus intimating their separate existence at that period. And again, when they are made “one nation,” it is to be “*on* the land, *upon* the mountains of Israel,” as if the case continued otherwise with them while in the lands of their enemies. It is only then they are to cease being “divided;” and it is *then*, “they shall be *no more* two nations.” Even when thus united, there is no reason to believe they shall be *blended*, as those who take an opposite view suppose they already are. If “Judah shall not *vex* Ephraim,” it will not be on account of their distinctions having passed away; but because “Ephraim shall not *envy* Judah,” an expression which is deprived of its meaning by supposing them to have no *separate* existence. We say nothing here of the *future* distinction of both kingdoms into their respective *tribes*. Since such information can only be supplied miraculously, the prophecy of the New Division of the Holy Land, afterwards noticed, (Sect. VI.) supplies us with no information relative to their *present* state.*

* Those who take an interest in the present condition and future prospects of the Jews will find, in small compass, much important and interesting information, in an excellent Discourse, on “The Salvation of Israel,” by the Rev. William Symington, Stranraer. We have to lament, however, that the eloquent author has elsewhere derided our “blessed hope,” publicly reviling the God-glorifying, soul-sanctifying, and Scriptural doctrine of the Redeemer’s Speedy Personal Return, as a delusion of the Evil One.—May God grant him forgiveness, and give unto him illumination and repentance before “that day.” In the above-named discourse, indeed, he has not even expressed a decided opinion on the literal Restoration of Israel; but in his citations from the prophets in proof of their “need to be saved from their *wide dispersion*,” (p. 14.) and of “their being *gathered together*,” (p. 23.) he has produced evidence on which the reader can scarcely fail to decide for himself. Happily a spirit of inquiry has at length been awakened to these subjects; and those who search the Scriptures for themselves, will not receive the unproved and unproveable allegations of men as authority paramount to the word of God.

SECTION V.

ENLARGEMENT OF THE HOLY LAND.

CANAAN is in Scripture expressively termed, The Land of Promise. By this appellation our views are carried back direct to the intimations of Heaven's purpose concerning it; and Israel's title of possession is read in the *promise* of God. His promise to the Father of the faithful, repeatedly made with various specifications, and even confirmed by an oath, God again and again renewed to the descendants of Abraham, after his decease, with more precise definition of its boundaries.

When, obedient to the call of God, the patriarch with his near relatives left their kindred and departed from Ur of the Chaldees, after sojourning for a time in Haran, "they went forth to go into *the land of Canaan*, and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem unto the plain of Moreh; (and the Canaanite was then in the land.) And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, *Unto thy seed will I give this Land.*" Gen. xi. 31. xii. 1, 7. "And he went on his journeys from the south even unto Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, [xii. 8, 9.] between Bethel and Hai." (xiii. 3.) While dwelling here, "The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for *all the land which thou seest*, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." (xiii. 14, 15.)

These promises are very distinct, but they were followed by others in which the *boundaries* of the land are expressly stated. Having intimated to him while he dwelt in the plains of Mamre, the servitude to which his descendants should be subjected in Egypt for 400 years, "In that same day, the Lord made a *covenant* with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this Land, *from the River of Egypt, UNTO the Great River the river Euphrates*: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Gergashites, and the Jebusites." Gen. xv. 13—21.

Here is an extensive territory indeed. The Euphrates does not approach farther west than 40 deg. 20 min. east longitude, in any latitude corresponding with that of the Holy Land, either as promised or as hitherto enjoyed; while the most eastern point of the land, *as already possessed*, does not extend beyond 37 deg. of east longitude. The Nile or “River* of Egypt” being here given as another boundary mark of the promised Land, it necessarily includes Idumea and the land of Goshen, north of the eastern branch of that river. This allotment then embraces a considerable part of Syria, being the whole territory from the Euphrates on the north-east; and the whole of Idumea, being to the Nile on the south-west. And of this we are presented with a more particular specification of the nations included within the general outline given. The *Kenites* inhabited a district lying to the westward of the Dead Sea, and extending their southern boundary far into Arabia Petraea. (Compare Exod. iii. 1. with Judges i. 16. Numb. xxiv. 21. 1 Sam. xv. 16.) The *Kenizzites* seem to have occupied a district south-east of the Kenites. (Josh. xv. 17. Judges i. 13. iii. 9, 11. 1 Chron. iv. 13. xxvii. 15.) The *Kadmonites* or Eastern people, dwelt in the north-eastern parts of Canaan, under Mount Hermon, in the land of Mispeh or Gil-ead, (supposed to be the same with the *Hivites*, Numb. xiii. 29. Josh. ix. 1. xi. 3. Judges iii. 3.) The *Hittites*, the offspring of Heth, the second son of Canaan, dwelt in the southern part of Palestine near Hebron, (Gen. ii. 3. Judges i. 26. 2 Sam. xi. 6. 1 Sam. xxv. 6. 2 Kings viii. 7. 1 Kings xi. 1. 2 Kings vii. 6.) The *Perizzites* are supposed to have principally lived dispersed among the other tribes of the Canaanites, living sometimes in one country and sometimes in another. (Gen. xiii. 7. Josh. xvii. 15. Judges iii. 5. i. 4. 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. 2 Chron. vii. 7. Ezra ix. 1.) The *Rephaims* were a race of giants, inhabiting a fruitful valley situated on the confines of what became the territories of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, (Josh. xv. 8. xviii. 5. 2 Sam. v. 18, 22. xxiii. 13. 1 Chron. xi. 15. xiv. 9. Is. xvii. 5.) The *Amorites* had two powerful kingdoms on the east of Jordan, governed by Sihon and Og. They had at

* “The *Egyptian* name for the Nile seems to have been simply, *Phiaro, the River.*” *Modern Traveller*,—Egypt, vol. I. p. 6.

one time a great part of the territories of Moab and Ammon; and they had other kingdoms all along the south of Canaan, westward of Jordan. (Num. xxi. xxxii. Deut. i. 44. Josh. xii. xv. xix. Judges vi. 10. 2 Kings xxi. 11. Amos ii. 9.) The *Canaanites* here refer to some tribes of that people particularly called by their name, who dwelt in the midland by the sea west-ward, and by the coast of Jordan east-ward. The *Girgashites* are supposed to have been the ancestors of the Gergesenes, on the east of the sea of Tiberias. (Josh. xxiv. 11. Mark. v. Luke viii. 26. Mat. viii. 28.) The *Jebusites* dwelt about Jerusalem, and the mountainous country adjacent. (Num. xiii. 29. Judges i. 21. 2 Sam. v. xxiv. 16. Zech. ix. 7.)

This promise was renewed to Abram when his name was changed to Abraham, the Lord re-assuring him that there should be given to him and to his seed, “the land wherein thou art a stranger, [or ‘the land of *thy sojournings*,’ marg.] *all the land of Canaan*, for an everlasting possession.” Gen. xvii. 5—8.

This assurance was repeated to his son, *Isaac*, while at *Gerar*, whither he had removed from the well, Lahai-roi, in the wilderness of Shur, on account of a famine. “And the Lord appeared unto him and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of; sojourn in this land and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed *I will give all these countries*, and *I will perform* the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father.” Gen. xxvi. 2, 3.

It was also renewed to Jacob in the vision of the ladder of celestial communication at Bethel: “And behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; *the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed*; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

The same promise was renewed, with new and important specifications, to the children of Israel, after the giving of the law from mount Sinai: “I will set thy bounds *from the Red Sea even unto the Sea of the Philistines, and from the Desert unto the River*; for I will deliver the

inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them out before thee." Exod. xxiii. 31. As by other specifications, we find *that* part of Stony Arabia included which is embraced *between* the Gulphs of the Red Sea, it is evident that the expression "from the Red Sea even unto the Sea of the Philistines" points to the Elanitic Gulph on the south-east and all west from it to the Mediterranean, or the Sea of the Philistines. "From the Desert to the River" gives us the desert of Egypt and Arabia, (Gen. xvi. 7. Exod. xv. 22.) through which they were just passing, as their southern boundary, from which the whole land "unto the River," as the Euphrates is by way of eminence termed, is comprehended in this important grant.

This extent of the divine promise is again declared in the address delivered by Moses to the children of Israel, while in the land of Moab, before his death: "The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, ye have dwelt long enough in this mount, turn you and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto; in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale; and in the south, and by the sea side; to the land of the Canaanites, *and unto Lebanon*; unto the *Great River*, the river *Euphrates*. Behold I have set the land before you; go in and *possess the land* which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them." Deut. i. 6—9. Still has God respect unto his oath; and at each renewal of the pledge, given long before, does he recall to their remembrance that his purpose of giving the land unto them, is in fulfilment of the covenant made with their fathers,—that their possession should extend from the Red Sea and River of Egypt on the south and south-west, and to the Euphrates and Lebanon on the north-east and north-west. When thus addressed by the Lord the children of Israel were in mount *Horeb*, between the Gulphs of the Red Sea, 140 miles south of what afterwards became the boundary of the land as hitherto possessed by Israel; yet, in the wide range thus set before them, they are still called to go into all the places even "*in the south*" of Horeb, which is situated only about 50 miles north of the most southern extremity of the peninsula.

The same promise was reiterated by Moses in the

course of his speech addressed to Israel on delivering to them the law : “ For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him ; then will the Lord *drive out all these nations from before you*, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours, *from the Wilderness and Lebanon*; from the River, the river *Euphrates*, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be.” Deut. xi. 22—24. Euphrates on the north-east, and Lebanon on the north-west, are here again declared; and while “the Uttermost Sea” or Mediterranean, marks with perfect precision the western boundary, that on the south is also intimated to be “the Wilderness” or Desert of Arabia, which they had so long traversed, and so recently left.

After the death of Moses, Joshua became the chosen leader of the children of Israel, and to him was the promise again addressed : “ Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses; *from the Wilderness and this Lebanon*, even unto the Great River the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.” Josh. i. 2—4. Still have we the same extent of territory here marked out; the Wilderness on the south, Lebanon on the north, the Euphrates on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west.

But at the command of God, the boundaries of the Land, were laid down with the utmost precision by Moses to the children of Israel, while in the plains of Moab. Numb. xxxiv. The citation of this statement, with the introduction of others with which it corresponds, from a parallel passage by Joshua, (xv.) will tend to show in a clearer light the limits of the land in its full extent. “ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel and say unto them, when ye come into the land of Canaan, (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof.) Then your *South QUARTER* shall be from the wil-

derness of Zin, [“southward,” or leading towards the south, Josh. xv. 1.] along by the coast of Edom, [or Idumea, “was the uttermost part of the south coast.”] Josh. xv. 1.]

Having thus given a general statement of the south *Quarter*, he proceeds to give a specification of the boundaries which he traces on its different sides, beginning with the south: “And your *south Border* shall be the outmost coast of the Salt Sea, eastward,” or from the south-east corner of the Dead Sea, “from the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that looketh southward.” Josh. xv. 2. “And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim;” “or the mountains of Accaba, (Signifying ‘ascent’ in Arabic) which run towards the head of the Elanitic or Eastern gulph of the Red Sea,” says the Rev. T. H. Horne, of whose distinct view of the boundaries, as obtained from combining the statements contained in the books of Numbers and Joshua, we shall now avail ourselves by a direct quotation—“passing (we may presume, with Clayton) through the sea-ports of Elath and Eziongeber, on the Red Sea, which belonged to Solomon, (1 Kings ix. 26.) though they are not noticed in this place. ‘Thence it shall pass on to [the wilderness of] Zin,’ on the east side of Mount Hor, including that whole mountainous region within the boundary; ‘and the going forth thereof shall be to Kadesh Barnea, *southwards*; and it shall go on to Hazar Addar, [Joshua (xv. 3.) interposes two additional stations, Hezron and Kirkaa, before and after Addar, or Hazar Addar, which are not noticed by Moses;] and pass on to Azmon.’ ‘And the border shall fetch a compass,’ or form an angle, ‘from Azmon,’ or turn westwards ‘towards the river of Egypt,’ or Pelusiac branch of the Nile; ‘and its outgoings shall be at the sea,’ the Mediterranean.*

“‘ And as for the *western Border*, ye shall have the Great Sea for a border. This shall be your West border.’ The Great Sea is the Mediterranean, as contrasted with the smaller seas or lakes, the Red Sea, the Salt Sea, and the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee.

“* This termination of the southern border, westwards, is exactly conformable to the accounts of Herodotus and Pliny: the former represents Mount Casius, lying between Pelusium and the Sirbonic lake, as the boundary between Egypt and Palestine Syria, (3. 5.) the latter reckoned the Sirbonic lake itself as the boundary, (Nat. Hist. 5, 13.)”

“ ‘And this shall be your **NORTH Border**: from the Great sea you shall point out Hor ha-hor, (not ‘Mount Hor,’ as rendered in our English Bible, confounding it with that on the Southern border, but) ‘the mountain of the mountain,’ or ‘the double mountain,’ or Mount Lebanon, which formed the Northern frontier of Palestine, dividing it from Syria; consisting of two great parallel ranges, called Libanus and Antilibanus, and running eastwards from the neighbourhood of Sidon to that of Damascus.

“ ‘From Hor ha-hor ye shall point your border to the entrance of Hamath;’ which Joshua, speaking of the yet unconquered land, describes ‘All Lebanon, towards the sunrising, from (the valley of) Baal Gad, under Mount Hermon, unto the entrance of Hamath.’ (Josh. xiii. 5.) This demonstrates that Hor ha-hor corresponded to all Lebanon, including Mount Hermon, as judiciously remarked by Wells, who observes that it is not decided which of the two ridges, the northern or the southern, was properly Libanus; the natives at present call the southern so, but the Septuagint and Ptolemy called it Antilibanus—‘ From Hamath it shall go on to Zedad, and from thence to Ziphon, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar Enan, (near Damascus. Ezek. xlviii. 1.) This shall be your north border.’

“ ‘And ye shall point out your **EAST Border** from Hazar Enan to Shephan, and the coast shall go down to Riblah, on the east side of Ain, (‘the fountain’ or springs of the river Jordan,) and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the [EAST] side of the sea of Chinnereth. And the border shall go down to Jordan on the east side, and the goings out of it shall be at the Salt Sea.’ There it met the southern border, at the south-east corner of that sea, or the Asphaltite Lake.

“ ‘This shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about in circuit.’

“ Such was the admirable geographical chart of the Land of Promise, dictated to Moses by the God of Israel, and described with all the accuracy of an eye-witness. Of this region, however, the Israelites were not put into immediate possession. In his first expedition, Joshua subdued all the southern department of the Promised Land, and in his second the northern, having spent five years in both (Josh. xi. 18.): what Joshua left unfinished of the *conquest*

of the whole was afterwards completed by David and Solomon. (2 Sam. viii. 3—14. 2 Chron. ix. 26.) In the reign of the latter was realized the Abrahamic covenant in its full extent. ‘And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt....for he had *dominion* over all the region on this side the river (Euphrates,) from Tipsah (or Thapsacus situated thereon) even to Azzah, (or ‘Gaza with her towns and villages, unto the river of Egypt,’ southward, ‘and the Great Sea,’ westward, (Josh. xv. 47.) even over all the kings on this side the river’ Euphrates,) 1 Kings iv. 21—24.” *Horne’s Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.* Vol. III. p. 4—6.

Such is an outline of the Promised Land, the accurate understanding of which will be greatly facilitated by glancing upon any Map embracing all its bounds. With the map in view, an ideal line drawn from the Mediterranean on the west, to Thapsacus on the Euphrates in the east, (lat. 35 deg. 20 min. north) will give the northern boundary; and on the south-east of Idumea, extend the view westward from Eziongeber, along the shore of the Red Sea, including the various curvatures formed by its gulphs, till the line reaches Suez, (the Etham of Scripture. Ex. xiii. 20. Num. xxxiii. 6.) Traversing the land of Goshen, now stretch over from Suez to Cairo, in lat. 30 deg. north, and lon. 31 deg. 14 min. east, (the Rameses of Scripture, Ex. xii. 37. Num. xxxiii. 3.) and continue northward along the right bank of the eastern branch of the Nile to the Mediterranean, which will give the *southern* boundary.

This extent of territory, however, Israel has never yet “*possessed*,” which is God’s promise explicitly given in the most unqualified terms. In the reigns of David and Solomon, as remarked, the nations occupying the countries adjacent to the then possessions of Israel, even to the full extent of the original grant, were indeed *tributary*; and in this, it has been argued, the promise of God was fulfilled. But this was not Israel’s *possessing* the land, as promised by God. Nor was there any restriction made in the divine grant to their *occupying* a part only of the specified territory, and the *subjection* merely of others. On this principle of interpretation, indeed, it could not be proved that the Lord had promised them *any part* of the land for actu-

al possession. For since no such distinction as this would imply was expressed in the grant, if God's covenant was fulfilled by a part of the promised land having been rendered tributary merely, then certainly might it have been equally fulfilled, had the whole been so also. But Heaven stands pledged to Abraham, that unto his seed shall the whole prescribed territory be "*given.*" The land is *theirs*, in all its length, and in all its breadth; theirs absolutely, exclusively, and inalienably, by right of Heaven's high investiture. As such it was claimed by them, and this formed their warrant of procedure against its former guilty occupants, whom they were authorized, and commanded to destroy: "And ye shall *dispossess* the inhabitants of the land, and *dwell* therein; for *I have given you the land to possess it.*" Numb. xxxiii. 53. When in Horeb, concerning the whole land, having its north and north-eastern boundaries "unto Lebanon, unto the Great River, the river Euphrates," God's command was, "Behold I have set the land before you, go in *and possess* the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *to give* unto them, and to their seed after them." Deut. i. 6—8. This whole land "from the Wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the Great River, the river Euphrates," all the land of the Hittites, and unto the Great Sea" or Mediterranean, Joshua was commanded to "*divide for an inheritance*" unto the children of Israel. Josh. i. 4—6. And after an enumeration of the extensive conquests made by Israel under Joshua, (xii.) at the command of God he gives an account of what remained for them to possess, for it is added, "*there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.*" Josh. xiii. 1. And much of it has ever so remained: "This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, [on the west,] and all Geshuri, [in the north east.] From Sihor [the Nile, on the south. Is. xxiii. 3. Jer. ii. 18.] even unto the borders of Ekron north ward, which is counted to the Canaanite; five Lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdorites; the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites, also the Avites. From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, [in the north, Josh. xii. 18. Judges i. 31.] to the borders of the Amorites: And the land of the Giblites, and *all Lebanon* toward the sun-

rising, from Baal-Gad, [the present Balbeck, in lat. 34 deg. north,] under mount Hermon, *unto the entering in of Hamath*. All the inhabitants of the hill-country, *from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-Maim*, [Josh. xi. 8.] and all the Sidonians; them will I drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites *for an inheritance*, as I have commanded thee.” Josh. xiii. 2—6. And all of this territory, from the Sihor* or Nile on the South, to the entering in of Hamath on the North, was to be, not merely held in dominion, but actually “to be possessed.” ver. 1. But sure as it was made by the pledge of Jehovah’s oath, the whole land was not to become at once the possession of Israel. The Lord said concerning the nations to be ejected and destroyed, “I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, *lest the land become desolate*, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. *By little and little*, I will drive them out from before thee,

* Although by the Egyptians themselves called simply The River, “the name by which the Nile was known to the Hebrews, is the *Sihor*, (or *Sichor*), answering to the Greek *Melas*, and the Latin *Niger*; and this name it is stated to have borne on account of its black and turbid waters, or rather the black slime which it deposited.”—MODERN TRAVELLER,—*Egypt*, Vol. I. p. 4.

With the mistaken view of adapting the boundaries of the Promised Land to the extent of territory formerly in actual possession by the children of Israel, it has become usual for our Sacred Geographers, to affix to the small river Bezor, which flows into the Mediterranean, in lat. 30 deg. north, the names “Sihor” and “River of Egypt,” which evidently belong to the Nile. But this is not the most difficult part of the work to be accomplished before the desired end is obtained. It matters them little how far northward they transfer the “River of Egypt,” unless they can at the same time remove “the Red Sea” (another of the *boundary* marks,) from the south to the north of Idumea. And even this transposition would not suffice; for unless they could change the situation of Damascus, and bring “the Great River, the river Euphrates” 200 miles westward, or toward the Mediterranean, there would still remain the discrepancy, which it is their object to remove. It would even be still farther necessary to bring down the towns, &c. which mark the northern boundary, to make their situations also coincide with the outgoings of the ancient Palestine in that direction. The task is a Herculean one; but, unless the whole can be performed, the attempts made with “the River of Egypt” only display ignorance and inconsistency, without in the least obviating what they feel to be a difficulty. Ere long we trust a better explanation of God’s promise will be afforded in its accomplishment, to all its extent, in behalf of Abraham’s seed.

until thou be increased AND INHERIT the land.” Ex. xxiii. 29, 30. We are accordingly informed that, at an early period, Bela, a descendant of Reuben, “dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo, and Baal-meon: and eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead. And, *in the days of Saul*, they made war with the Hagarites, [inhabitants of a province on the Persian Gulph,] and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east land of Gilead.” 1 Chron. v. And although from the smallness of their numbers, Israel long continued unable to occupy so large a territory, it was still considered as theirs by promise and by covenant. On this they founded a claim which they regarded as unceasing, and with this idea evidently in view, we read that David “went to recover HIS border at the river Euphrates.” 2 Sam. viii. 3. *His* border at the Euphrates! His it never yet had been, except by the grant of God to Abraham and his seed; and that divine grant alone could have warranted his invasion for this “recovery of his border” there. But recognizing the promise of God to their fathers, David was now securing their “inheritance,” which should be possessed when their future increase rendered it necessary to occupy the whole, which was not yet the case. It was the same divine grant which authorized Solomon afterwards to “levy a tribute of bond-service” upon the descendants of all those nations “whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy.” 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. And as his father, David, secured the conquest of the whole Promised Land, so Solomon afterwards reigned over it. 2 Sam. viii. 1 Kings iv. 21. The former occupants were to be driven out, “by little and little,” for of the inhabitants of the whole land, “from the Red Sea, even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the Desert unto the river,” the Lord declared, “I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and *thou shalt* [not merely receive tribute from them, but ‘thou shalt’] *drive them out before thee.*” (Ex. xxiii. 31. Deut. xi. 23, 24.) and it was God’s specific promise, concerning all the different nations within Israel’s bounds, “from the Red Sea even unto the Sea of the Philistines, and from the Desert unto the River” Euphrates, that “*they shall NOT DWELL in thy land.*” Ex. xxiii. 20—33. These are predictions which

have never yet been fulfilled. It was Israel's sin, that when they were able, they "did *not* utterly drive them out" from much of the promised land as they had been commanded. For this sin they were severely rebuked and chastised. (Judges i. 21—36. ii. 1—3.) But although that generation criminally deprived *themselves* of the full enjoyment of the promised blessings, *their* guilt could neither alienate nor annul the covenant which God sware unto their fathers. The promise shall ultimately be performed, though by the sins of successive generations it has been long delayed. Their faith in the fulfilment of this covenant was long tried before it pleased God at all to bring them thither; their accession of it was made by degrees and at different times; and, as regards *possession* of the land in all its extent, it has never yet been more than matter of promise. No time was specified for the accomplishment of God's purpose of goodness towards them. From the first, they were told they should not receive the whole at once; and, at the very time when by the oath of Jehovah it was secured in covenant, Abraham was informed his seed should not enter into immediate possession of any part of it. In extirpating the nations for their wickedness, God would vindicate his righteousness even in the eyes of sinful men; and the iniquity of the Amorites, (the first of the nations given into their hand, Deut. ii. 32—36.) "was not yet full." Gen. xv. 16. The seed of Abraham were meanwhile to be oppressed, strangers in a land not theirs, for four hundred years, whence they were to come in the fourth generation. Gen. xv. 13, 16. This promise was fulfilled in the exodus from Egypt, when the Lord led them out with a high hand, and brought them to the Land of Promise. Their disobedience and manifold provocations were, however, punished by God's withholding from them much of what He sware to give. But when they return to the Lord with all their hearts, He will yet perform that good thing in their behalf.

A literal restoration of the outcast and scattered Israel must therefore be obtained, that they may occupy the land promised to their fathers, and that the faithfulness of God be not found to fail. This is accordingly promised for future times, and the recovery of it is distinctly foretold. "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together:

they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them." Is. xi. 14. This is part of a prediction which clearly refers to their future Restoration, (as shown in the preceding Section,) when the Lord "shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy of Ephraim also shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;" and then upon Mount Zion, "there shall be holiness." It therefore refers to a future time, when the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah, claiming the promised land, "shall spoil them of THE EAST together; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them."

"Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions; and the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and *there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau,* [the Edomites, or Idumeans,] for the Lord hath spoken it. And Saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau."^{*} Obad. 17—21. In order that the house of Jacob may "possess their possessions," including "the Mount of Esau," and the captivity of the Canaanites, "even unto Zarephath;" they shall destroy until "there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau :" nor can the fulfilment of this distinct but remarkable prediction be referred back to the time of David or of Solomon, not having been given till hundreds of years *after*. The destruction it foretells is, besides, very different from receiving "tribute" from the Edomites. Its application to the future Restoration of Israel, is also obvious from its being immediately followed by the Millennium : "*And the Kingdom shall be the Lord's.*" ver. 21.

This forcible possession of the promised land was pre-

* "They are," says the Rev. Mr. Mason of Wishawtown, "to conquer and possess the Philistines, Edom, Moab, and the children of Ammon....As Israel, when they came up out of Egypt, did subdue and possess the land of Canaan ; so the remnant of this people who are left among the Gentiles, when they shall be assembled together, shall conquer and inhabit the land of Promise." (Gentiles' Fulness, p. 125.)

dicted by Moses in the blessing he pronounced on Israel before his death : “ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms ; and *He shall thrust out the enemy before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.* Israel then shall dwell in safety alone : The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and *thine enemies* shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon *their* high places.” Deut. xxxiii. 26—29. It is also the very threat which the wicked Balaam prophetically declared to Balak concerning Israel and his people “ in the latter days.” Numb. xxiv. 14—24.

The enjoyment of their land, to the extent of the original promise, is accordingly one of the blessings announced to be received by Israel for the Millennial period ; and its boundaries are fully marked out in that remarkable prophecy with which the book of Ezekiel concludes : “ Thus saith the Lord God, This shall be the border whereby ye shall inherit the land, according to the *twelve tribes* of Israel ; Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another ; *concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers* : and this land shall fall *unto you* for inheritance. And this shall be the border of the land toward the *North side* ; from the great sea, [the Mediterranean,] the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad ; Hamath, [or Epiphania, on the river Orontes, in lat. 34 deg. 45 min. north,] Berothah, Sibraim, (which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath,) Hazar-hatticon, (which is by the coast of Hauran;) and the border from the sea shall be Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath ; and this is the north side. And the *East side* ye shall measure from *Hauran*, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the East Sea, [the Salt or Dead Sea, which having then been “ healed” (Ezek. xlviii. 19.) and having lost its present characteristics, will be named “ East” merely, in reference to its situation with re-

spect to Jerusalem,] and this is the east side. And the *South side* southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river [Nile] to the great sea, [the Mediterranean,] and this is the south side southward. The *West side* also shall be the great sea, [the Mediterranean,] from the [south] border till a man come over against Hamath; *this* is the west side. So shall ye divide this land unto you, according to the tribes of Israel." Ezek. xlvi. 13—21. This is an extent of territory vastly beyond what Israel has ever yet enjoyed. Their land, as formerly possessed, is even given as one of the marks by which the new boundary on *one side* is to be ascertained: "FROM *the land of Israel*, by Jordan." ver. 18.

SECTION VI.

NEW DIVISION OF THE HOLY LAND.

THE enlargement of Israel's inheritance will necessarily occasion a new division of the land. Accordingly, the divine allotments to the various tribes, after their restoration, are distinctly recorded in the interesting and important prophecy, concerning the Latter Day, with which the book of Ezekiel concludes. It is a regular division, altogether different from that made in the days of Joshua, the lots of the tribes being proportioned to the extent of the enlarged inheritance. It embraces the whole land, as marked out in the 47th chapter, already cited at the end of the preceding Section,—having the same boundary marks assigned on the North and on the South. It begins "from the *North* end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath (for these are his sides east and west,) a portion for Dan." "And by the border of Gad, at the South side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh, and to the river toward the great sea." Ezek. xlviii. 1, 28. Distinct specification is made of the relative situations of the whole, all running parallel to each other from east to west. In this, the New

Division differs entirely from that made by Joshua; and we know of nothing better calculated to convince the inquirer of its reference to future times, than a careful examination of the prophecy, and the perfect contrast which its division presents to any which has ever yet obtained. The utmost regularity is here prescribed, each lot lying alongside of the others; while the most casual inspection of any map of Palestine will show, that the Division by Joshua was regulated by no principle of regularity or order. That division was made evidently with a respect to what territory had already been acquired, and which could therefore be made available for present possession by the different tribes. It was exceedingly irregular, and the manner in which the allotments were made gives pretty striking indications of the division not having been designed to be permanent. The lot of the tribe of Manasseh is divided into two, the parts of which do not lie contiguous; the extensive country to the east of Jordan was given to the two tribes and a half, at their own request, before any of the rest of the land was conquered; (Numb. xxxii.) and after Judah's lot was fixed, it was found to be too large for them, and Simeon's lot was taken out of it, (Josh. xix. 1, 9.) These circumstances sufficiently show, that however necessary it was to have some division at the time, that the one made was only temporary. But when Israel shall be restored and converted, and receive the whole of the land promised to their fathers, a New Division will be made more in accordance with their happier circumstances, and to remain as the fixed boundaries of their several tribes, as fully and minutely predicted by Ezekiel. (xlviii.) The distinction of tribes having long been lost, it can now be regained only by miraculous information: but it will doubtless be supplied, otherwise the specification contained in this chapter had never been given.

But besides the portions allotted to the Twelve Tribes, nearly in the centre of these a large portion, called the Holy Oblation, is also reserved as an offering unto the Lord: "Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for an inheritance, ye shall offer an Oblation unto the Lord, an Holy Portion of the Land; the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, [the reed being six cubits long, Ezek. xl. 5, or nearly eleven feet English,] and

the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be *for the Sanctuary* five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and *in it shall be the Sanctuary*, and the most holy place." Ezek. xlvi. 1—3. This is farther described, and its relative situation determined, in another chapter: "And by *the border of Judah*, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side unto the west side, and the *Sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.*" Ezek. xlvi. 8. Concerning this it is said, "The Holy Portion of the land shall be for the priests, the ministers of the Sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the Lord; and it shall be a place for *their houses*, and an holy place *for the Sanctuary.*" Ezek. xlvi. 4. Another portion of equal size with that described above, is reserved for the Levites, who formerly had no inheritance: "And, over against the border of the priests, the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth; all the length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand. And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange nor alienate the first fruits of the land: for it is holy unto the Lord." Ezek. xlvi. 13, 14. This is also confirmed in the 45th chapter: "And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the House, have for themselves, for a possession for *twenty chambers.*" Ezek. xlvi. 5.

It is worthy of remark that this portion called the Holy Oblation, which, as we shall afterwards show, is to contain the New Jerusalem, the residence of the Redeemer and glorified saints, is situated between the lots of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which formed the Kingdom of Judah. Christ himself belonged to the tribe of Judah, of the seed of David; and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, having respect to the promise of God that he would give unto the *Seed of David* his father's throne, remained faithful in their allegiance, when the kingdom of Israel revolted. This

passage gives a more peculiar significance to the inscription over the cross of Him who said, “I am King of the *Jews*.”

The Division of the land into its various portions is in the following order, beginning at the north border, and descending southward: The portions of Dan, of Asher, of Naphtali, of Manasseh, of Ephraim, of Reuben, and of Judah (xlvi. 1—7); next of the Holy Portion or “Holy Oblation four-square,” offered unto the Lord (xlvi. 8—22); then follow the portions of the remaining tribes, of Benjamin, of Simeon, of Issachar, of Zebulun, and of Gad.” (xlvi. 23—28.) And “this is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord God.” ver. 20.

But in this Division is to be noticed another and most remarkable circumstance. Besides the ancient city of Jerusalem which is to be rebuilt, and in which the Sanctuary of the Lord is to be re-erected, particular mention is here made of another City of nearly ten miles square, separated by the portion of the Levites, twenty miles in breadth, from that in which the Sanctuary is placed: “And the five thousand that are left in the breadth, over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane place for **THE CITY**, for dwelling and for suburbs, *and the City shall be in the midst thereof.*” ver. 15. The measurements of this city with its suburbs follow, and it is added, “And the residue in length, over against the Oblation of the Holy Portion, shall be ten thousand eastward and ten thousand westward, and it shall be over against the Oblation of the Holy Portion; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve **THE CITY**. *And they that serve THE CITY shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel.*” Ezek. xlvi. 15—19. These three compartments, into which the Holy Oblation is divided, consisting of two of ten thousand reeds each, in breadth, and one of five thousand, all being of equal length, render it in whole a square of fifty miles: “All the Oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand; ye shall offer the Holy Oblation four-square with the possession of **THE CITY.**” Ezek. xlvi. 20.

This remarkable allotment offered to the Lord, it is to be observed, is situated nearly in the centre of the different portions of all the tribes of Israel, “between the border of

Judah and the border of Benjamin," and it is said, "shall be for THE PRINCE." After describing the boundaries of the remaining five tribes of Israel, (the relative situation of which is also different from what they were formerly,) and again adverting to the measurements of this remarkable City, with the number and names of its gates, the prophecy closes by declaring of it, that "The *name* of THE CITY from that day shall be, THE LORD IS THERE."*

SECTION VII.

ISRAEL THE MOST HIGHLY HONOURED NATION.

DEGRADED as Israel now is and has long been, when restored they shall be highly esteemed among the nations, and perpetually enjoy the peculiar favour of God. The promises of this are numerous. And in quoting a few, it will not be necessary, on this head, to prove their reference to future times, this being universally admitted. But, being very generally claimed, like the promises of previous Sections, as the property of the entire *Christian Church*, we must still endeavour to ascertain their rightful owner.

One of these delightful predictions is given by the prophet Isaiah : "For *Zion's* sake will I not hold my peace, and for *Jerusalem's* sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the *Gentiles* shall see thy righteousness, and *all kings* [or kingdoms] thy *Glory*; and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt *no more* be termed *Forsaken*, neither shall *thy land* any more be termed *Desolate*; but thou shalt be called *Hephzi-bah*, and *thy land* *Beulah*; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and *thy land* shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall *thy sons* marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the

* To some other particulars concerning this City we shall have occasion to advert in the 23d Section, on the New Jerusalem.

bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Is. lxii. 1—5. As it is the literal Jerusalem which has been termed "Forsaken," and the literal land of Israel which has been termed "Desolate," so surely it is the literal city and land which will be "no more" so called, when this promise is fulfilled. The distinction between the Gentiles and those apostrophized by the prophet, is besides clearly expressed : "The *Gentiles* shall see *thy* righteousness." It is not therefore their own but *Jerusalem's* righteousness, (as is common in all languages, the *place* for the *people*,) which the Gentiles shall see; and accordingly, the prophecy proceeds; "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night. (Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give Him no rest, till he establish, and till he *make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*) The Lord hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will *no more* give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness." ver. 6—9. That it is the literal Jerusalem (the city for the people) that is addressed, is thus more obvious. It is the literal Israel's "*corn*" that has been meat for their "*enemies*," and the wine for which *they* laboured have strangers drunk. It will, therefore, be in the literal Israel's better days that this shall "no more" be the case, even when the Lord shall make the now forsaken Jerusalem "*a praise in the earth.*" And accordingly, in the following verse the call is made to "prepare the way" for their restoration: "Prepare ye the way of the people." And when their highway has been "cast up;" and when the "stones" which impede them in their journey Zion-ward, have been removed; and when a "standard" has been elevated, around which they may rally; and when their "Salvation" shall have come, then men "shall call them, The Holy People, the redeemed of the Lord, and [again apostrophizing Jerusalem,] *thou* shalt be called, Sought out, [in contrast to her name during the dispersion,] a city *not* forsaken." ver. 11, 12.

In this bold but beautiful figure of personification the Lord again addresses Zion: "Surely the *isles* shall wait

for me, and the *ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far*, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and *their kings* shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.... The sons also of those that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated; so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but *the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.* Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall *inherit the land* for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." Is. lx. 9—22.

There are few prophecies more frequently misapplied than this, and there are few that have a greater number of marks by which we may distinguish its proper objects. A single glance at the whole chapter is sufficient to prove its

application to the literal Israel, and we have therefore quoted at some length. The prophecy abounds with beautiful *figures*, but they are figures having no reference to the Gentile church.* Throughout, a distinction is maintained between “the Gentiles” and those to whom the prophecy immediately relates. It is figuratively addressed to *Zion*, as representing the people of Israel, the “sons” brought “from far.” These have the *attendance* of the *Gentiles*, from whom they are clearly distinguished : “The Gentiles shall come to thy light ;” and “the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee”—pointing out a perfect distinction between those *coming* and those to whom they *do come*. When Zion’s “sons” are brought “from far,” they shall bring “their silver and their gold with them.” This accords with other predictions concerning their restoration, but it is sometimes applied to the converts to Christianity consecrating their wealth to the service of the Lord. But although this is a duty to which believers are bound to attend, it has nothing to do with the prediction before us. It is Israel’s bringing their valuable property with them when they shall return *from far*, from those countries into which they have been led captive. But the sons of Zion are not merely to bring their wealth with them, they are *themselves* to be brought; and that by a *conveyance*, the mere mention of which should be sufficient to prevent its ever being applied to the Gentile church : “and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from far.” ver. 9. “Ships,” while perfectly suited, and really requisite, for the restoration of Israel from many of the lands into which they have been scattered, are quite unnecessary as a mode of admission to the *fellowship of the church*. Farther, it was the literal Israel, and not the church, whom God “smote” in His “wrath ;” it was the literal Israel whom the nations “afflicted” and “despised,” who were

* Though often overlooked, there is a wide difference between *figurative language* and that which is sometimes called *spiritual*. The former may be used for the illustration of any subject, but the power of the latter is uniformly exercised in clustering blessings of every nature (and sometimes incongruously enough) around the Gentile church. Figurative language, properly applied, is equally elegant and useful ; but the end the other is frequently made to serve is only an abuse of words.

"forsaken" and "hated;" and to them, in happy contrast to their past and present state, does the promise apply : "Violence shall *no more* be heard in *thy land*; wasting nor destruction within *thy borders*." ver 18. And as their being brought "from *far*," accords with the predictions contained in preceding Sections, so also with these do the promises harmonize that Israel "shall be all righteous," and that "they shall *inherit the land* for ever;" and that they shall be greatly multiplied : A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." May the Lord "hasten it in His time" !

With such numerous checks, it is surprising that any of God's people should seek to alienate the prophecy from those to whom it has been given. The promises are conceived to be too great, and the prediction too sublime, to refer to the debased, despised, oppressed, and infidel Hebrews. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as ours. Of the aggravation of their past and present guilt, *man* cannot form so correct an estimate as the Holy Spirit, and none can speak more decidedly the language of its just condemnation than does the word of God. Yet, for His own glory, Jehovah hath "chosen Zion : He hath desired it for His habitation." He will yet "clothe her priests with Salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." (Ps. cxxxii. 13—16.) It is not to *apostate* Israel, but to Israel reclaimed from the error of their ways, that such abundant glory is reserved. When they shall obtain external homage, they shall be possessed of internal grace. The prophecy itself declares that their "people shall be all righteous;" and to the period of their conversion does the apostle Paul also place its fulfilment, while he gives the whole weight of his inspired testimony to the legitimacy of its application to the literal Israel. The verses we have quoted form part of a prediction which is continued from the preceding chapter, the conclusion of which, (slightly accommodated, being quoted from the Greek translation of the seventy,) the apostle adduced to the Romans, applying it directly to the literal Israel : "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, [how much needed, and how much neglected is the admonition now!] that blindness in part has happened to ISRAEL

until the fulness of the *Gentiles* be come in ; and so *all* Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, [Is. lix. 20.] There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob ; for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.” Rom. xi. 25—27. Here the apostle, expressly drawing a distinction between the Hebrews and the Gentiles—a distinction unequivocally maintained throughout his argument—proves his position concerning the future national salvation of Israel, by the quotation of a portion of the very prophecy we have already been considering. But had that prophecy been given in promise to *the Gentile church*, rather than concerning the literal Israel, who had then been “broken off because of unbelief,” its evidence would have been altogether inadmissible. The apostle’s proof would be at once rendered worthless by such a supposition. His argument evidently rests upon the fact of the prediction referred to having been given in favour of those whose “fall” was “the riches of the world,” and “the diminishing of them the riches of *the Gentiles*;”—which fall shall continue “*until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” or till the close of the present Gentile dispensation.

Higher sanction cannot be required in favour of the interpretation already given of the above sublime prediction, as applicable to the Hebrew nation ; to whom we have seen, it is absolutely limited by the language of the prophecy itself. And we are thus admonished of the error of transferring to the Gentile church blessings pronounced on Israel. In general, the slightest examination of the context is sufficient to show to whom any prophecy refers ; and this is particularly the case in the predictions concerning the honour which Israel shall obtain after their restoration. We quote another, parts of which are subjected to the same misapplication so often noticed : “I will make all *my mountains* a way,” saith the Lord, “and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far : and, lo, these *from the north* and from the *west* : and these from the *land of Sinim*. Sing, O heavens ; and be joyful, O earth ; and break forth into singing, O mountains : for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But *Zion* said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget

her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; *thy destroyers*, and they that made thee waste, *shall go forth of thee*. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and THEY shall bring THY sons in their arms and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Is. xlix. 11—23.

In the preceding Sections, it has been fully shown *who* they are, that at the commencement of the Millennium, shall come "from the north and from the west, and from the land of Sinim." It has also been ascertained, to what Zion it has been said, "*thy* children shall make haste;" that it is that Zion which the destroyers have so long made "*waste*;" she who yet complains, "I have lost [by dispersion] my children, and am *desolate*." It is the same Zion whose "*sons and daughters*" are brought to their own land,—brought by friendly "Gentiles." The pen of Inspiration here clearly draws the distinction so often overlooked by those interpreters who refer such predictions to the Gentile church; "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold,

I will lift up mine hand *to* the Gentiles, and set up my standard *to* the people ; and *they* shall bring *thy* [Zion's] sons, and *thy* daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders"—a beautiful figure of the tender and affectionate solicitude which believing Gentiles shall yet feel in the interests of God's ancient people, and the assistance they shall render in their restoration. The figure is still continued in language which proves that the restoration of Israel to their land, will, at a future time, in some countries at least, become an object of royal concern ; and that the homage of the rulers of nations, in their official capacity, shall be presented to them : " *Kings* shall be thy nursing-fathers, and *queens* thy nursing-mothers ; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet." What a change must be effected in the minds of men, when the Lord shall have " turned again the captivity of Zion ! "—when, instead of being " spoiled evermore," Israel shall " eat the riches of the Gentiles"—when, instead of their " old desolations," " the sons of strangers shall build up their walls"—when, instead of the oppression and tyranny they everywhere experience, " the nation and kingdom that will not serve them shall perish."

The assistance rendered by Gentiles to Israel in returning to their own land is beautifully recognized in Scripture Prophecy as a service done to God, and they themselves are acknowledged as a " present" to Him. " In that time shall *the present* be brought *unto* the Lord of hosts, *of* a people scattered and peeled, (and *from* a people terrible from their beginning hitherto,) a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the Mount Zion." Is xviii. 7. The " time" referred to in the context is one of great commotion and distress ; a period deeply interesting to " ALL the inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth." ver. 3. In this time of awful trouble shall the restoration of Israel take place. (Dan. i. 1, 2.) They shall be aided in their return by others. The love of a *mighty people* shall be excited in their behalf ; the love of a *Christian* people, for they shall bring Israel as a present " *unto the Lord*"—even *literal* Israel, the people who have been " scattered and peeled." They shall bring them not merely into the *fellowship of the church*, but to

a particular *place*,—“the place of the name of the Lord of hosts,” which place “is the Mount Zion.”

“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the *waste cities*, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord ; men shall call you the Priests of our God ; ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.” Is. lxi. 4—6. In these verses it is evident, that those thus honoured are not Gentiles, but a people distinguished from them. *They* shall eat the *riches* of the *Gentiles*, but are themselves that people who, in Scripture Prophecy and in Gospel narrative alike, are contrasted with them. They are those whose “*waste cities*” need to be repaired, and whose “*former desolations*” require to be raised, “even the desolations of *many generations*.” When again they shall possess their land in peace and in security, and when blessed with the forgiveness and especial favour of God, Gentiles shall willingly be their servants in tending their flocks, in cultivating their fields, and in dressing their vineyards; while they themselves are more honourably occupied in the service of God,—“but ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord ; and men shall call *you* the Ministers of our God.” The Lord “shall cause *them that come of Jacob* to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.” Is. xxvii. 6. “And it shall come to pass when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, *they shall say no more*, THE ARK of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more. *At that time* they shall call Jerusalem THE THRONE of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk *any more* after the imagination of their evil hearts.” Jer. iii. 16, 17. That this is at the period of the Millennium, the last sentence sufficiently indicates. It is also connected immediately with the restoration both of Israel and of Judah, (ver. 18.) the context having been already considered. “And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of

the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, *even the FIRST dominion, THE KINGDOM shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.*" Mic. iv. 8. This is also at the future restoration of Israel and Judah, when the Lord shall "assemble her that halteth," and "gather her that is driven out." ver. 6, 7. "In that day shall *the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people.*"* Is. xxviii. 5.

SECTION VIII.

JERUSALEM REBUILT AND ENLARGED.

PART of the provision made for the long-dispersed, outcast, and despised Israel, is the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the capital, and formerly the glory of their land. "Thus saith the Lord, Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man, and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and *in the streets of Jerusalem*, (that are desolate without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,) the voice of joy and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of Hosts." Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11. That this promise refers to future times is evident from its being when the Lord will cause both "the captivity of *Judah* and the captivity of *Israel* to return." ver. 7; and "in those days shall *Judah* be saved, and *Jerusalem* shall dwell *safely*; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" ver. 16. Such descriptions of the *safety*

* Much of the difficulty which many experience in believing that these sublime and gracious promises shall really be accomplished, arises from their estimating God's designs concerning the future by present appearances, and from their always viewing the predictions with reference to human probability. But it ought to be remembered, that if "the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel," that what He has promised he is able also to perform. It is charged as an aggravated part of the provocation in the wilderness that they "tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." Ps. lxxviii. 41.

and *holiness* of Jerusalem cannot apply to any part of her previous history, but refer decidedly to the period of the Millennium.

A similar prediction concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem, is given by Jeremiah, although "the city" is not expressly *named*: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and *the city* shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be *as aforetime*, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish *all* that oppress them. And their nobles [Noble One] shall be of themselves, and their GOVERNOR shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for *who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?*" saith the Lord." Jer. xxx. 18—21. This refers clearly to the future restoration of Israel. The felicity and increase described, cannot apply to their return from Babylon; while its connection with the destruction and overthrow of *all* their enemies carries forward our views to the commencement of the Millennium as the period to which it relates; "*All* they that devour thee shall be devoured; and *all* thine adversaries, *every one of them*, shall go into captivity." ver. 16.

The city shall not only be rebuilt, but Prophecy significantly points to its occupation of the same site on which it formerly stood. In the above prediction it is marked with emphasis, "And the City shall be builded upon *her own* heap." The same thing is declared by Zechariah: "And Jerusalem shall be inhabited again *in her own place*, even in Jerusalem." Zech. xii. 6. This is repeated by the same prophet in another chapter, which contains some additional circumstances of interest: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one. *All the land* shall be turned as *a plain* from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and it [Jerusalem] shall be lifted up, and inhabited *in her place*, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate unto

the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses. 'And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be *no more* utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be *safely* inhabited.' Zech. xiv. 9—11. The futurity of the fulfilment of this prediction is alike evident from its close and commencement. It refers to the time when "the Lord shall be king over *all* the earth," when our prayer shall be answered, "Thy kingdom come." There shall then be "*no more* utter destruction;" but Jerusalem being rebuilt, "shall be *safely* inhabited," and this re-erection will be "*in her place*." It is not so obvious where "the king's wine-presses" formerly were, although we apprehend they may have been without the city; and if so, that this is an intimation of the future *enlargement* of Jerusalem. But the point to which we at present direct attention is to the circumstance of a portion of the *land* being "*turned into a plain*." This is to be "*from Geba to Rimmon*." The former was a city situated in the tribe of Benjamin; it was built by Asa, king of Judah, and was one of the "*thirteen cities given to the sons of Aaron*." There were *two* Rimmons; the one in the tribe of Zebulun, toward the northern boundary of Palestine; the other in the tribe of Simeon, on the border of Edom. The prophecy distinguishes these, and refers to the latter as that "*south of Jerusalem*." There is, therefore, no reason to doubt that the prediction is to be understood literally; although the change referred to be of a miraculous nature.

That the city is to be greatly enlarged is evident from the following prediction: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that *the city shall be built* to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth *over against it* upon the hill Gareb, and *shall compass about* to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and *all the fields* unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall *not* be plucked up nor thrown down *any more* for ever." Jer. xxxi. 38—40. The city shall not only "*be built*" to all its former dimensions, but a considerable enlargement is evidently described. The precise extent of this, however, it is difficult to ascertain, as we nowhere else find mention made of either Gareb or Goath.

But the line by which Jerusalem is *measured* going “*forth over against*” the one, and *compassing* “*about unto*” the other, it may be inferred they were at some distance from the city. But it shall include what evidently formed no part of the city formerly, “the *whole valley* of the dead bodies, [near to Golgotha, and supposed by some to be so called from the bodies of malefactors being exposed or interred there,] and of the ashes [supposed to be named from the ashes of the sacrifices thrown there] and *all the fields* unto the brook of Kidron,” or Cedron, which runs south-east-ward, along the east side of Jerusalem, through the valley of Jehoshaphat, also called the valley of the son of Hinnom. Without pretending to determine its precise limits, it is sufficient to prove its future enlargement, that *the city* is then to embrace within its bounds what formerly were the adjoining “*fields*.”

It shall then be remarkable, not merely for its enlarged accommodation, but eminent for its holiness: “Thus saith the Lord, *I am returned unto Zion*, and will dwell in the midst of *Jerusalem*, and *Jerusalem* shall be called a City of Truth; and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, The Holy Mountain. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, there shall yet old men and old women dwell in *the streets* of *Jerusalem*, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of Hosts.” Zech. viii.

3—6. Some of these characteristics *Jerusalem* has never yet possessed, and the prediction has internal evidence of its referring to the *holy* and *happy* Millennial Day. It is evidently subsequent to the restoration of both “the house of *Judah* and the house of *Israel*;” (ver. 13.) and is after the Lord should have “scattered” the inhabitants of “*Jerusalem*” with a “whirlwind among *all* the nations whom they knew not.” (vii. 7, 14.)

In another prediction, universally referred to the Millennial period, the Lord thus promises: “Behold I create *Jerusalem* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in *Jerusalem*, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be *no more* heard in her, nor the voice of

crying.... And they shall build *houses* and inhabit them ; and they shall plant *vineyards*, and eat the fruit of them." Is. lxv. 18—21. " And I will restore thy *judges* as *at the first*," saith the Lord, " and thy *counsellors* as at the beginning : Afterward thou shalt be called, The City of Righteousness, The faithful City." Is. i. 26.

SECTION IX.

THE WHOLE EARTH BLESSED IN ISRAEL'S RESTORATION.

IN again bringing His ancient people to the Land of Promise, the Lord will eminently promote his own glory, while their restoration will be attended with the most blessed effects to all the earth. His promise is, " I will make *them*, and *the places* round about *my hill* a *blessing*, and I will cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessing. And the *tree of the field* shall yield her *fruit*, and *the earth* shall yield her *increase* ; and they shall be safe in *their land*, and shall know that I am the Lord, *when I have broken the bands of their yoke*, and *delivered them* out of the hand of those that served themselves of them." Ezek. xxxiv. 26, 27. This is so manifestly the literal Israel, that we deem it altogether unnecessary again to refer for proof to its context, formerly considered. Nor has the promise been yet fulfilled, for then they shall not " bear the shame of the heathen *any more*." ver. 29.

" And I will cause the captivity of *Judah*, and the captivity of *Israel* to return, and will build them *as at the first*. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me ; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be *to me* a name of *joy*, a *praise*, and an *honour*, before *all* the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them ; and they shall *fear* and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Jer. xxxiii. 7—9. And will it not excite a burst of surprise from those in the *church*, who ought from the word

of God to be previously aware of the Lord's designs of "goodness" and "prosperity" to his ancient people? Why should that which God himself declares shall be to Him "a name of *joy*, a *praise*, and an *honour*," be so obstinately rejected, or so reluctantly received by any of His chosen?

"I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the *Gentiles*, and their offspring among the people: All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the *seed which the Lord hath blessed*. . . . For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all *people*." Is. lxi. 8—11. This shall be when they "repair the *waste cities*, the desolations of *many generations*;" when "they shall rejoice in their portion," and when, for the "shame" they have endured, "*in their land* they shall possess the double." ver. 4—7.

"And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of *Judah*, and house of *Israel*; so will I save you, and *ye shall be a blessing*." Zech. viii. 13. This being subsequent to the restoration of both kingdoms from "among the heathen," proves clearly that it is yet unaccomplished. "But now, I will not be unto the residue of this people, as in the former days, saith the Lord of Hosts; for the seed shall be prosperous, and the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things." ver. 11, 12. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." Micah v. 7. This shall be after their restoration, and when their last oppressor shall be destroyed; when the "Ruler in Israel" shall deliver them from "The Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders;" when they shall "raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men, and they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword;" (ver. 2—6) which is generally acknowledged to be at the period of their future restoration.

SECTION X.

MILLENNIAL FELICITY OF THE INFERIOR CREATION.

UNDER every aspect in which it can be viewed, the coming Millennium forms matter of delightful anticipation. Uniting with its bright manifestation of the glory of God, the general holiness and well-being of men, the heart which desires it not, must be pronounced destitute alike of the principles of Piety and the feelings of Philanthropy. In considering some of the prophecies concerning its holiness and happiness, our views are at once carried back to the early scenes of Eden's bliss, and we recall the delightful remembrance of unfallen man surrounded by the various tribes of animate creation sporting in peace and undisturbed security. Who that witnesses from day to day the sufferings of useful animals, under man's oppressive toils and outrageous cruelty, desires not ardently the time of their release? The pangs they are made to endure from these and other causes have been entailed upon them by man's transgression. Until Paradise was defiled by sin, harmony and love universally prevailed. Before corruption entered the human heart,—ere the Wicked One acquired his dire ascendancy over the lord of this lower creation,—the inferior animals even possessed not their destructive and offensive tendencies. Till then, those which are now distinguished by untameable ferocity, without reluctance acknowledged man's supremacy, and submitted to his sway. But Sin wrought a woful change. Man himself having rebelled against his bountiful Creator, Heaven made him read the reproof of his ingratitude in the dread, and insubordination, and fierce defiance, of animals which were wont to yield unto his will. And thus it has continued. Successive generations have passed away, and the same features of rebellion characterize man towards his Maker, and the lower tribes toward their lord. But thus it will not always be. Heaven hath decreed a better day as yet to dawn. Satan shall shortly be despoiled of his usurped dominion; and the blessing of the Lord shall again descend upon a regenerated earth. "Times of the *Restitution* of all things" He hath purposed from eternity, and announced to His

church “by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” When man shall be brought into subjection to the blessed Saviour, the Inferior animals shall also be restored to that state of submissive docility in which they originally were in Eden’s garden, when, Heaven-directed, they came to Adam, each and all, to receive their names. Then shall their mutual antipathies be destroyed, and harmonious association with man be restored—a felicity which shall extend to the various tribes of beasts, birds, and creeping things.

This is represented to us by the prophet Hosea, as the result of “a covenant” made by the Lord in favour of His people, when he shall have taken away their transgressions: “And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord,” referring to the period of their restoration, “that thou shalt call me Ishi, [my man-husband ;] and shalt call me no more Baali, [my lordly husband,] for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall *no more* be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with *the beasts* of the field, and with *the fowls* of heaven; and with *the creeping things* of the ground; and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth, and will make *them* to lie down safely.” Hos. ii. 16—18. Thus, then, the evil propensities of man, and the antipathies of the lower creation are to be destroyed together “in that day.” So, it is elsewhere predicted, in the Millennial day men “shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they *learn war* any more.” And in the prediction before us, it is the promise of the Lord that when the time of his “covenant” with the inferior animals in favour of his people shall arrive, He shall also “break the *bow* and the *sword* and the *battle*,” from the earth. Instruments of war shall be rendered unnecessary, as war itself will not be practised. Neither will “*the bow*” be handled against the lower creation. God having made a covenant *with them*, “for” his people, so also will he break the *bow* that these animals may be allowed to “lie down *safely*.” But if *they* are to be secure against the aggressions of men, so also will the peace and safety of men be uninterrupted by *their* attacks, and unthreatened by their oppos-

ition. God's covenant is "*with*" them, "*FOR*" his people. This covenant is not confined to one class of animals, but embraces at once "*the beasts of the field,*" "*the fowls of heaven,*" and "*the creeping things* of the ground. All the tribes which men are made to fear, are thus included. How perfectly distinct is the prediction! yet its truths are disbelieved. Beasts, birds, and reptiles, are all supposed by many to be only "*wicked men.*" But God makes no "*covenant*" with "*wicked men.*" On the contrary, He everywhere threatens to *destroy* them. And it deserves to be noticed how precise is the language employed above. He will "*make a covenant*" with the lower creation—a figure beautifully expressive at once of their continued existence, and the cessation of their enmity; but the instruments of war and of cruelty He threatens to "*BREAK*" "*out of the earth.*" They shall altogether *cease* to have existence.

A similar prediction, concerning the same time, and expressing more fully the change upon the natures of the Inferior Animals, is given by the prophet Isaiah: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of His roots....and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. *The wolf ALSO shall dwell with the lamb,* and the *leopard* shall lie down with the *kid*, and the *calf* and the *young lion*, and the *fatling* together; and a little *child* shall lead them. And the *cow* and the *bear* shall feed; their *young ones shall lie down together*; and the *lion shall eat straw like the ox*, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the *asp*, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. [*"adder's," marg.*] They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Is. xi. 1—9. In the prophecy already considered, it is predicted that the various animals shall "*lie down safely.*" This might have been considered as proof of the eradication of their mutual antipathies *toward each other*, as well as their relief from that fear *of* and enmity *to* man by which they are at present characterized; for unless the former were also removed, they could not lie down "*safely.*" But in the prediction last quoted, their mutual cordiality is explicitly foretold. The

meekest and the most ferocious, the least suspecting and the most crafty, the unresisting and the most courageous,—all mingle here in harmonious concert. The ravening wolf shall cease to injure the innocent lamb, and the forest-prowling leopard to tear the kid; the cow and the bear shall graze together; and the king of the forest, no longer glutting in blood, shall partake of oxen's food; the venomous asp and adder shall become harmless, and children without dread engage them in sport.—And how beautifully introduced is the reason of all this; “*FOR the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*” As the sin of man, in departing from the living God, was the cause of all the discordance introduced into this lower world, so when he is brought again to the allegiance due to his Maker—when the knowledge of the Lord shall become universal, and man everywhere submits to the sceptre of His Son—then shall the curse of enmity be removed, and all be restored to happiness and peace. As man's rebellion unfitted him for properly exercising power over the Inferior creation;—when he would have employed them in unhallowed subserviency to the execution of his own rebellious schemes against the Most High—then was he deprived of his hitherto unlimited authority; the submission of all was rendered reluctant, and the fealty of many absolutely refused. But when the power of the First and great Seducer is destroyed from the earth, when the reign of universal holiness has commenced; and when, by cordial attachment to God through his Son, man shall have become fit to be again entrusted with primeval authority, under Christ he shall again stand forth as the honoured and acknowledged lord of all the inferior creation.

Notwithstanding of its particularity, however, the above prediction is also supposed to foretell merely a great change on the dispositions of *men*. Every thing stands opposed to such an opinion, and we cannot discover a single circumstance from which it derives the slightest support. The very fact into which the *whole* prediction is thus explained is itself included, as a separate and distinct *part* of it. There is, therefore, no reason for substituting the destruction of wicked men from the earth *for* the change upon the natures of these animals, *both* being equally predicted. Besides what we have already quoted concerning the wolf

and the lamb, &c. of the Branch it is predicted, only two verses before, that “with the breath of his lips shall He *slay the wicked.*” ver. 4. What need is there then of supposing that all the promises which follow, concerning the inferior animals, mean nothing else than what is thus already predicted in language so distinct and appropriate? The substitution becomes the more unwarrantable too, from the fact of this change being expressly predicted as a circumstance *additional*, both to the destruction of the wicked and the righteous reign of the Branch: “With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips *shall he slay the wicked;* and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; *the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,*” &c. It is thus evident, that both do not mean the same thing; but that when the one shall take place, so “*also*” shall the other. The truth that the wicked shall then be slain, rests on no higher authority than does that of the change upon the natures of the animals mentioned.

A similar prediction is given by Isaiah, towards the close of his prophecy, in which one additional circumstance is introduced: “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and *dust shall be the serpent’s meat.* They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord,” Is. lxxv. 25. In neither of the preceding quotations was the food of the serpent noticed. From this, we are informed that “dust” alone is assigned to it. This was part of the curse originally pronounced upon the serpent as the instrument of man’s fall. While therefore the effects of sin, in entailing upon the creatures a spirit of enmity, shall then cease to operate, a stigma is still left upon one of them. The feeling of enmity to man and to other animals is to be taken away, even from the serpent tribe; but, probably as a remembrance of its having been the instrument employed by Satan in beguiling the mother of all, the serpent is doomed to feed on dust during that dispensation in which the Evil One himself shall be chained, incapable of practising his wiles on man. And does not this peculiarity also indicate the fact of these animals being really referred to?

But those who *spiritualize*, as it is called, all the predictions concerning the inferior animals attend little to such distinctions. Even accurate classification is wholly overlooked, when they equally convert into men of one character and disposition all the “beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and the creeping things of the ground.” Although every circumstance indicates their being designed to be understood in their natural sense, the lion and the leopard, the wolf and the bear; the ox, the cow, and the calf; even the asp and the cockatrice, are all transformed with ease; and, however dissimilar in their natures and habits, all become men of holy character and harmless dispositions. Consistency would require that the little *children* too, whether weaned or only at the mother’s breast, for whom these animals will, by the predicted change, be rendered safe play-mates, should also be made to grow to the perfect stature of harmless manhood. The circumstance of children being thus introduced into the prophecy, and that in contradistinction both to lions and lambs, to leopards and kids, is additional proof that *both* are to be regarded in their natural sense, if *either* be. The whole circumstances form evidence sufficient to prove, (should the *language* of such predictions require confirmation,) that upon the natures of the Inferior animals, a great, a miraculous change will be effected at the Millennial Day.*

* As we shall have frequent occasion to controvert the opinions advanced by the Rev. Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane, in his recent publication against Millenarianism, we owe it to him here to mention, that although he tumultuously opposes the doctrine of Christ’s Personal reign, he seems also to reject all the ordinary work of transforming the inferior animals. Viewing the predictions in their natural sense, he says, (p. 69.) they “evidently imply that both the human race and *the brute creation* are to be then preserved, and that it [the Millennium] is to be a period of uncommon felicity to man *and beast*.” But it is not easy to reconcile this miraculous restoration of the natures of the inferior animals to the pacific state in which they were before the fall, with his opinion (p. 134) that the Millennium in which this wonder will be witnessed, is to be realized by the mere “general diffusion of religious knowledge and prevalence of Christian principles.” The Scriptures are silent as to the mode of this change of nature, but that it must be miraculous requires no proof to show. It is one of the many wonderful displays of love which Christ, the God of nature, will make at His return.

SECTION XI.

THE REDEEMER'S MILLENNIAL REIGN.

IT has already been seen, from some of the preceding passages, that during this period of uninterrupted felicity, the kingdoms of this world will be under the Redeemer's sway. By his sufferings and death he has purchased redemption for his people, and in our nature obtained from the Father a promise of the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. We see not yet, indeed, all things put under him; but Jehovah has declared his decree, and will in due time carry it into execution.

It is not the object of the present Section to prove Christ's stay *on earth* during the Millennium. This being the subject of the following Section, we confine ourselves at present to the Selection of passages in proof merely of the Saviour's Millennial *reign*. This is explicitly declared in those which follow: “And in the days of these kings *shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom* which shall never be destroyed; *and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people*, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Dan. ii. 44. “I saw in the night visions; and, behold, one like the Son of Man *came with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And *there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom*, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.... And the kingdom, and dominion, *and the greatness of the kingdom UNDER the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him,” Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27. In these verses is declared the future setting up of a heavenly kingdom—a kingdom established by God himself, and which “shall not be left to other people.” Though celestial in its origin, and having its government committed to the Son of Man, and administered by His saints, it is still on the earth, being “under” the heaven. It is, however, *universal*, being “under the *whole* heaven,” and includes “all dominions.”

The time of its establishment and the manner of Christ's coming are here also introduced, but these being subjects of future consideration, we do not now advert to either.

This is a theme very frequently touched, and not unfrequently dwelt upon by all the inspired bards. In the following Psalm, as in many others, it has blended with it the Restoration of Israel, whose song of triumph on that occasion it evidently is: "O clap your hands all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph; for the Lord Most High is terrible; He is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, [Israel,] and the nations [by whom they have been oppressed] under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, [alluding probably to the New Division of the Holy Land,] the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. [His triumphal approach.] Sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises unto our King, sing praises. *For God is THE KING of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding,* [an exhortation to which more attention ought to be given;] God reigneth over the heathen; God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, *even the people of the God of Abraham;* for the shields of the earth belong unto God; He is greatly exalted." Ps. xlvi. The restoration of Israel appears to be expressed in these "princes" being "gathered together." The term "Israel," which signifies "a Prince with God," was given to Jacob when, at Peniel, "as a prince he had power over the Angel and prevailed." This name was afterwards applied to his descendants, "the people of the God of Abraham," the "princes," apparently, in the above psalm, which clearly refers to Christ's Millennial Reign.

God is pledged in covenant to David to give this kingdom to his Seed, Christ: "I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy Seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations....Also I will make Him, my first-born, *higher than the kings of the earth....Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His Seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.* It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Ps. lxxxix. 3—37.

In other predictions, this promise is intimately connected with the Restoration of Israel: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up *unto David*, and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. For thus saith the Lord, *David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel*; [from this time spoken of, when "in those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely;"] neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.... Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with *David* my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne,* and with the Levites the priests my ministers." Jer. xxxiii. 14—21. This last part of the prediction belongs properly to a subsequent Section on the rebuild-

* The Examiner in the Christian Instructor, already referred to, admits that "the tabernacle of God is to dwell with men, and the Son of David is to sit and rule *on David's* throne, in a sense that has not yet been accomplished." (page 476.) But we see no sense in which this can be fulfilled but literally. For, if he should say that nothing more is meant by this expression than that the influences of the Holy Spirit shall be plentifully shed upon the souls of men, we reply that this is no *new* sense; it is not a sitting upon the throne of David in any way. If we were at liberty to understand the promise, as referring to the Spirit's influences, then must we conclude, that the Son of David now sits and rules *on David's* throne, since every believer does enjoy these influences—to say nothing of the manifest impropriety of calling the souls of believers the throne of David. We do not see how it can, in any sense, be said, that the Mediator, by a continued residence in heaven, either sits or rules *on David's* throne, which was upon the earth. This appears to be a misapplication of language not to be imputed to the blessed Spirit, and very different from that admirable precision which characterizes the Holy Scriptures. It is to take a latitude of spiritualizing by which the most obvious meaning of any passage in Holy Writ may be explained away, or its meaning perverted to sanction the grossest heresies.

ing of the temple, in which will be shown God's purpose of sacrifice being continued during the Millennium.

This King, the Son of David and the Branch of Righteousness, is evidently no other than Christ Himself; but this is still more obvious from the following: “For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, [‘Father of the everlasting age,’ Louth,] the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. *The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*” Is. ix. 6, 7. “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days, Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

SECTION XII.

THE REDEEMER'S PRESENCE ON EARTH DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

In some of the foregoing passages, *the coming of the Son of Man* is announced, and in others, His presence on earth is fully implied, although we have hitherto abstained from comment upon them. This, however, we shall now endeavour to prove, by the quotation of predictions in which it is expressly promised: “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy. The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more.” Zeph. iii. 14, 15. This is the literal Israel

who are to be brought “from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.” ver. 10. It is also their future restoration, after which they shall “not see evil *any more.*” The king of Israel spoken of is “even the Lord,” who shall then be “in the midst” of them. Nor is this to be explained into their conversion, which is also predicted: “the remnant of Israel shall *not do iniquity.*” ver. 13. Does not the prediction intimate that when the Lord’s judgments on Israel are past, their enemies cast out, their transgressions pardoned, and they shall see no more evil,—when, in short, the Millennium arrives, that then the Lord Jesus will indeed dwell upon the earth, and be “the King of Israel”?

In the following prediction of the prophet Zechariah, the coming of the Saviour and his continuance on earth appear to be explicitly foretold: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: *for lo! I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee,* saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and *I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.* And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the Holy Land, *and shall choose Jerusalem again.*” Zech. ii. 10—12. Israel, “the daughter of Zion,” is called to rejoice for the coming of the Lord. Nor does this seem capable of being understood in any other sense than of a *personal* coming, for they shall “know that the Lord of Hosts *hath sent me unto thee.*” Having been sent, He will *dwell* with them “in the Holy Land.” Such circumstances seem fully to imply His personal presence. By way of contrast, it seems also to point to his former rejection, when they refused to recognize Him as their Messiah; but they *shall* now “know” that he is the “sent” of the Lord. The conversion of “many nations” is here also foretold, not as either the *coming* of the Lord or his after dwelling with them, but as additional to and consequent of it: “*And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.*”

Again, by the same prophet, “Thus saith the Lord, I am *returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;* and Jerusalem shall be called a city of Truth, and *the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, The Holy Mountain.*” Zech. viii. 3. To “return” to a place implies not merely having been formerly in it, but also an intervening *absence*

from it. This promise cannot therefore apply to the *church*, from which God's Spirit is *never* absent. Applied to the personal presence of the Lord Jesus, its language is characterized by propriety as well as condescension. In human nature he has already been in Zion, and His coming to it again will therefore be a "return." There will then be a great change too in the moral character of the city—it will be "a city of Truth." The contrasted permanence of His future residence may also be pointed out in the expression, He "will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem."

The Coming of the Saviour, and His abode with His people, is the frequent theme of Inspired Psalmody: * "Thou

* So full of these doctrines are the Songs of Zion, that their revival has poured a flood of light upon our Psalmody; and perhaps the unwarrantable substitution of uninspired hymns and paraphrases in worship, is to be attributed to the suppression of these truths. The disbelief of the doctrine of our Lord's Millennial Reign, and others connected with it, has occasioned much obscurity, although the difficulty of reconciling some of these sacred compositions with our notions of the gospel, ought long ago to have excited a suspicion of our departure from the primitive faith. There is evidently something wrong in the principle which has led some churches to the almost regular exclusion of these heavenly songs for the effusions of erring men. Had our collection of psalmody—originally inspired and designed for praise by the Holy Spirit, and afterwards collected and arranged under divine superintendance—been either inapplicable, or been found imperfect for *Christian* worship, another collection would doubtless have been made by Christ or his apostles. At least, it may be presumed, directions would have been given for completing the canon of praise when the greater spirituality, and wisdom, and refinement of the Church had rendered additions indispensable or expedient. But such a lack appears neither to have been felt nor anticipated in the primitive church with respect to the number or fitness of the Psalms for Christian worship. It was left to an age of higher attainments to discover and supply this great omission of the Author and Finisher of our faith.—But how careful ought Christians to be that they do not transgress by adding to that which the wisdom of the Spirit considered already complete, and by exchanging those holy songs, which they know to be in accordance with the will of God, for hymns and paraphrases which they may sometimes have reason to suspect of doubtful orthodoxy! The greater elegance of the poetry is an inadequate compensation for the loss sustained by the exchange; for, even in cases where the original Psalm may be obscured in our translation, and where the critic's eye may detect a want of taste, there are still left a glory and a dignity which bear down every lesser fault, and impart to the believer a higher relish than the mere charms of poetry could ever yield.

shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion ; for the time to favour her is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof. So the *heathen* shall fear the Name of the Lord, and all the *kings* of the earth *thy glory*. When the Lord shall build up Zion, *He shall appear* in his glory." Ps. cii. 13—16. "Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, *who dwelleth at Jerusalem*." Ps. cxxxv. 21. In the first of these, it is promised that at the restoration of Israel, "when the Lord shall build up Zion," He shall then "appear," not as when formerly he tabernacled on earth, but "in His glory." His appearance in humility was shortly before the *destruction* of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, but when Zion shall be again *built* up, "He shall appear in his glory." He shall then dwell "AT Jerusalem." This expression appears quite inconsistent with the notion that "*Jerusalem*" is *the church*. To dwell *at* Jerusalem plainly implies that it is, in this instance, *the place* rather than the people that is spoken of.

The practice of applying all such predictions to the presence of the Holy Spirit with the church, and as figurative expressions of the conversion of Israel, is unauthorized and quite unnecessary. The conversion of Israel is no doubt frequently foretold by the Hebrew prophets, and figurative expressions denoting their regeneration are indeed used in Prophecy as may be seen in the Section on the Conversion of Israel; but the figures used are perfectly appropriate, and are obviously so. The taking out of them *the stony* heart, and giving to them an heart of flesh, is a figure—the *washing* them as with clean water is a figure—the opening of a *fountain* for sin and for uncleanness is a figure—the putting His law in their inward parts, and writing it in their hearts, are figures—the pouring upon them a spirit of grace and of supplications, is a figure. All of these are figures, and of such a nature as not to be misunderstood. They express unequivocally the idea of conversion, a blessing which our Second Section proves to be also the subject of abundant promises in which no figure is used. Why, then, must the promises of the Coming of the Lord be also supposed to predict what is thus so fully and plainly declared? There is no need for the assumption. In most cases, it can only create a mere redundancy of expression, and it is altogether inconsistent with the language of many

of the predictions in which that coming and presence are announced.

"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel *in the midst of thee.*" Is. xii. 6.

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days *without a king, and without a prince,* and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, *and THE BELOVED their King:* and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." Hos. iii. 4, 5. It has been a literal "king" and "prince" that the children of Israel have so long been without, and this want is to be supplied by "The Beloved" himself becoming "their king." This prediction contains also a distinct promise of their conversion, for they shall then "fear the Lord;" and this shall be "in the latter days."

"Behold the Lord God *WILL COME with strong hand,* and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is *with him, and his work before him.*" Is. xl. 10. "And ye shall know that *I am in the midst of Israel,* and that I am the Lord your God, and none else, and my people shall never be ashamed." Joel ii. 27. "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God *dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain;* then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more....but Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for *the Lord dwelleth in Zion.*" Joel iii. 17, 20, 21.

On this subject, instead of connecting and comparing Scripture with Scripture, in order to obtain its combined evidence, it has been more usual to *assume* that Christ will not reign personally upon earth, and then to endeavour by any means to explain all these passages, as they individually occur, consistently with the views entertained. Even with this resolution it must occasionally prove difficult really to believe that some of the preceding promises mean nothing more than the universal prevalence of holiness, and the greater effusion of the Holy Spirit, while the Redeemer still remains in heaven. And if such an accommodation prove inadmissible, as an explanation of declarations so explicit as have been already quoted, there are others which still less admit of any spiritual interpretation. In a most important and interesting prediction clearly referring to future

times, the prophet Isaiah says, “Behold the Lord *rideth upon a swift cloud*, and shall *come into Egypt*: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His *presence*, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof; and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts.... In that day shall Egypt be like unto women; and it shall be afraid, and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of Hosts which he shaketh over it.... In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the Land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of Hosts, in the Land of Egypt; for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and *he shall send them a Saviour, and a Great One*, and He shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it.” Is. xix. 1—21.

The connection in which the coming of the Lord here stands to the Conversion of Egypt leaves no doubt of its being yet unfulfilled; while the expressions used concerning the coming of the Lord and His being sent seem only applicable to a personal coming: It is while groaning under the yoke of earthly “oppressors,” the prayer is addressed to the Lord for deliverance: when they have been given “into the hand of a cruel lord, and a *fierce king* shall rule over them.” ver. 4. Their prayer is answered, for the Lord “*shall send them a Saviour*,” even the Lord, who shall come riding upon “a *swift cloud*,” and “*shall deliver them*” from that oppression. How is it possible to interpret this of any other than a personal coming of the Saviour? The manner of His coming—upon a “cloud”—corresponds exactly with the prediction given by Himself concerning his Return: “Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a *cloud* with power and great glory:” (Luke xxi. 27.)

and which was subsequently repeated by attendant angels at His ascension *in the cloud*: “shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts i. 11.) In neither of these, nor in any other New Testament prediction, have we any intimation of *the place* to which he shall descend; and it is to be observed that the prediction under consideration *is the ONLY ONE the Scriptures contain* of the Saviour’s coming in, or on, or with a cloud, or clouds, to *any specific place*. But if He ever come to earth again, (and there are few, indeed, who doubt or question *this*,) it must be to *some* place. Why then disbelieve the fact, that on this swift cloud, He “shall come *into Egypt?*” This was the theatre of God’s early wonders in behalf of his ancient people, and his coming thither at this time is probably connected with *their* future deliverance. In the prophecy, “*the land of Judah*” is introduced, as “*a terror unto Egypt:*” (ver. 17.) and in what way the circumstances of Israel may yet be involved with those of Egypt, it is impossible to say. That they will be so in a great degree, is obvious from many predictions, which it would be inconsistent with our present object to introduce.*

* Moses thus concludes his prophecy of their dispersion and sufferings: “And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again *with ships*, by the way whereof I spake unto thee; (thou shalt see it no more again:) and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you.” Deut. xxviii. 68. Although well aware that this is supposed to have been fulfilled when many of the Jews were carried into Egypt by Titus, still we apprehend the prediction refers to future times. It stands in order posterior to all the threatenings of their being scattered into all nations—they are also to be brought to Egypt *in ships*, a mode of conveyance not adopted by Titus, so far as we can remember to have noticed—they are *to be sold*, until men refuse to buy them; but although, after their captivity by Titus, they were employed in Egypt at the public works of the Roman government, we do not know that they were “sold” at all. There are many of the Jews *still* in Egypt, nearly eighteen hundred years after that captivity, but from a parenthetical clause in the prophecy of Moses, we are led to conclude that when thus brought thither in ships, they shall not long continue nor ever after return thither: “Thou shalt see it *no more again.*”—And that there is some connection between Israel and Egypt, at the restoration of the former, appears from many prophecies. On the consideration of these, however, we do not enter. If we believe that the Lord has really been pleased to declare his purpose of coming to Egypt, in preference to anywhere else, His wisdom being infinite, his sovereignty is not to be questioned, although we may not know fully His more particular designs.

The prophets predict great sufferings as to be endured by the children of Israel after their Restoration to Palestine, from the attack of confederated nations. In their time of affliction and necessity, the Lord promises to manifest Himself for their succour. This is briefly but distinctly declared by the prophet Zechariah: “Behold, *the day of the Lord* cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations *against Jerusalem* to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. *THEN shall the Lord go forth* and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. *And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and *the Lord my God shall come, and ALL THE SAINTS with thee*. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the *light shall not be clear nor dark*; but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, *not day nor night*; but it shall come to pass that at evening-time it shall be light.” Zech. xiv. 1—7.

This prediction is not more remarkable for the importance of its statements than for the particularity with which they are given. It has more the appearance of a narrative of past events than of a prophecy of things to come. It is really vexatious to be under a necessity of endeavouring to elucidate the meaning of language already as distinct as words can make it. It is mortifying to be compelled to insist that the Jerusalem here spoken of is the literal city of that name—that it is a real attack it shall sustain, and a real capture it shall endure—that “the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east” is the literal mount of that name—that it is a natural or more properly speaking a miraculous earthquake by which it shall be cleft, and a real flight by which it is followed. All this appears so ob-

vious, that we feel puzzled *how* to attempt to prove it; for, if its own internal evidence cannot be received as sufficient, we should despair of ever finding any other more satisfactory. Is not that a literal city which contains "people," and "women," and "houses," and against which "nations" are gathered "to battle?" And if this be the literal "Jerusalem," can that be any thing else than the literal "Mount of Olives" which is, and always has been, "before Jerusalem *on the east?*" If this be the literal mount, then is not that also a literal "earthquake" by which it is rent,* resembling that which took place in the days of Uzziah? And if all these be literal, What can we understand by the Lord's *feet* standing upon the literal Mount of Olives, but the fact of His Personal presence? It is followed by that period of happiness and peace, when "there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited; and must therefore be His premillennial appearance to take into His own hands the government of the world—"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." ver. 9, 11. Nor does he come alone, but having "all the saints *with thee*"—the very truth declared in almost every passage of the New Testament concerning the Saviour's Return. It is no spiritual, no *figurative advent* which has

* At the close of next Section, (p. 112,) we shall advert to the purpose probably designed to be served by this earthquake. It may remove a prejudice from the minds of some who cannot allow themselves to believe the Word of God in its plain and obvious meaning, unless they are previously enabled to see the utility of the designs declared, to show that, from the situation of this hill, it is necessary that through it a channel be prepared for the New River which shall flow from Jerusalem into the Dead Sea.

In his "Fall of Babylon," (p. 44,) Mr Mason quotes the above passage as the account of a literal or "*natural* earthquake;" but in his Gentiles' Fulness, (p. 201,) combating the opinion that this coming of the Lord with all His saints is His personal advent, he unhesitatingly rejects the interpretation he had himself thus given, and denies that the earthquake is to be "*literally understood.*" This way of explaining the ancient predictions, he there says, (forgetting his own recorded explanation,) "must be rejected as a *very false* interpretation of Scripture, and as an *unwarrantable and dangerous* way of exhibiting Divine operations." Putting *consistency* out of the question, is there not, we would ask, something both "*unwarrantable and dangerous,*" in thus moulding Divine predictions to *our taste or convenience?*

such an accompaniment, but the real personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Referring to the restoration of Israel, the Lord says, "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant THE BELOVED; he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant THE BELOVED a Prince *among them*: I the Lord have spoken it." Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. He shall not merely have power over and in them, but shall be *a Prince AMONG them.*" No language that we can conceive could more explicitly intimate His personal presence with his people. "Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign *in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem*, and before his ancients gloriously." Is. xxiv. 23.

Such quotations might easily be multiplied, in proof of Christ's presence on earth during the Millennium; but we shall now allude to only one other point of evidence: The prophet Ezekiel having seen the measurements taken of the temple to be erected in Jerusalem, which forms the subject of more immediate inquiry in the following Section, he was afterwards brought to "the gate that looketh towards the east; and, behold, the Glory of the God of Israel *came from the way of the east*; and *His* voice was like a noise of many waters; and the earth shined with His glory.... And the Glory of the Lord *came* into the House, by the way of the gate whose prospect is towards the east.... And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and *the place of the soles of my feet*, where I will *dwell* in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they nor their kings.... Now let them put away their whoredom and the carcases of their kings far away from me, and *I will dwell IN THE MIDST OF THEM for ever.*" Ezek. xlivi. 1—9. "Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward Sanctuary which looketh toward the east, and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, *and NO MAN shall enter in by it; BECAUSE the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.*" Ezek. xliv. 1, 2. An altar of wood was also shown to the prophet in the

temple, when it was said to him, “This is the *table* that is before the Lord.” Ezek. xli. 22.

Do such passages admit of any other possible interpretation in any way consistent with propriety? Although bearing simply the title of “Glory of the Lord,” the Saviour is evidently alluded to, and that in his personal character. He speaks, and speaks of *the place of the soles of his feet*, and he enters in by a gate—a gate appropriated to Himself by which no man shall enter in, for which the very reason is “*because* the Lord, the God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.”

SECTION XIII.

THE TEMPLE REBUILT.

IN the prophecies, allusion is often made to, and predictions given concerning, a splendid temple which is yet to be erected in Jerusalem, and to the worship to be offered in it. We offer no conjecture on the probable *design* for which the institution of sacrifice is again to be restored during the Millennial age, which must have a *retrospective* view to the death of Him who “has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God,” as those under the former dispensation was *prospective*. Of this nature is the Lord’s Supper, and it is in remembrance of Christ only *till He come*; but whether it is then to be superseded by the institution of sacrifice, we pretend not to determine. It may be remarked, that for the Gentile dispensation, during which the Church has been in an obscure and oppressed state, the simple institution of the Supper may have been better adapted; while at the Saviour’s Return, when “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High,” the more splendid institution may be the most befitting as a record of the Saviour’s triumph. But whatever be the precise design, that sacrifice shall yet be offered to the Lord is so unequivocally foretold, as leaves no doubt on our mind of its truth. Part of this evidence we shall endeavour to submit, unrestrained by the tide of

prejudice which is known to exist upon the subject. Believing the word of God to be of supreme authority, we unhesitatingly appeal to its statements as evidence the value of which the opinions of men will never diminish, and our faith in which their opposition should never induce us to forego. “ Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, *and I will set MY SANCTUARY in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my SANCTUARY shall be in the midst of them for evermore.*”

Ezek. xxxvii. 26—28. This is the conclusion of the prophecy in which the future union of the two kingdoms of the literal Israel and Judah is symbolically represented by the joining of the “two sticks,” after which “they shall be *no more* two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms *any more* at all; neither shall they defile themselves *any more* with their idols;” from which time THE BELOVED “shall be their Prince *for ever.*” ver. 22, 23, 24. That it relates to future times is therefore obvious; while it also explicitly declares the re-erection of God’s Sanctuary among them. And when thus rebuilt, it shall not again be thrown down, but shall continue “evermore.”

By the prophet Isaiah, the Lord declares, that the glory of Lebanon shall be used in ornamenting this His House: “The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee [Zion]; the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, *to beautify the place of MY SANCTUARY, and I will make the place of MY FEET glorious.*” Is. ix. 13. In considering the context at large, we have already endeavoured to show its application to the literal Israel, and its reference to Millennial times. We may now ask, For what other Sanctuary than a literal one can such materials be used? The particular trees here specified are trees high in estimation both for utility and ornament, and are therefore adapted to “beautify” a literal Temple.

The second temple was greatly inferior to the first in splendour, as we read (Ezra iii. 12), “Many of the priests, and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men that had seen the *First House*, when the foundation of *this House* was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.”

And concerning it, the Lord says to Israel, by the prophet Haggai, “Who is left among you that saw this House in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” Hag. ii. 3. But he comforts them with the promise of one which shall *excel* the First: “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the *Desire of all nations* shall come, and I will *fill this House with glory*, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver and the gold are mine, saith the Lord of hosts. *The glory of this latter House* shall be *greater* than the *former*, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.” ver. 6—9. The Desire of all nations, it is universally admitted, is here used as a title descriptive of the Saviour; and the prophecy is generally referred to the period of His First Advent, although the commentators have laboured under the utmost difficulty to make the prophecy accord with such an interpretation. The fact they cannot deny, that the Second temple was much *inferior* in splendour to the First. This difficulty they seek to evade, by departing from the *material* glory of the First, and referring to the *moral* glory of Christ having been in the Second as a Teacher. But this is not only to destroy altogether the prophet’s contrast, but also to overlook the fact that the prophecy itself marks its reference to this very point. When it is said, the “glory of this *latter* House shall be *greater* than the *former*,” we would naturally understand the prediction to refer to the *same kind* of glory, the difference consisting not in the *nature*, but in the *degree* of it; and that, therefore, if it was a *material* glory in the one case, that so it would be in the other. And this view is confirmed, when we observe that it was in the same respect that the Second House was *inferior* to the First. To this *natural* comparison between the First and Third House we are, moreover, limited by the language of the prophecy itself. By it we are taught that to the *material* superiority of the latter House the prophet really *does* refer: “The silver and the gold are mine, saith the Lord,”—and he says so only in reference to the glorifying of this Temple; “the glory of *this* Latter House shall be *greater* than the *former*, saith the Lord of hosts.” It is therefore a glory to the in-

crease of which these precious metals can contribute, which is here spoken of. This was *the kind* of glory in which the First Temple far excelled the Second, and it is the glory in which *the latter* will be greater than even *the former*: “the silver and the gold are mine, saith the Lord.” *In addition*, however, to this material superiority, the Lord promises to “*fill* this house with glory”—a promise which evidently refers to the glory in which He will manifest Himself, and is altogether distinct from *that* glory of the First temple, in comparison of which the Second was “as nothing.”

It has also been supposed, from the prophet’s speaking of the latter temple as “*this House*,” that he referred only to the second temple. But while Haggai expressly speaks of the latter as *excelling* the former, and speaks of the second as greatly inferior even to the first, he views *all the three* as still God’s “*House*.” He does not introduce them as *distinct* Temples, but as the *same* Temple *in different states* and at *different times*. Thus of the *second* Temple he asks, “who is left among you that saw *this House* in her *first* glory?” Now while he thus views the first and second temples, as still the same “*House*,” consistency requires that the second and third should also be regarded as identical.

It is farther to be observed that when this temple is built, there shall in an eminent degree be “*peace*” in Palestine: “and *in this place* will I *give peace*, saith the Lord.” Without insisting on the force of the expression, we would merely remark, that it seems rather to belong to that class of promises which relate to the Millennial period than to any preceding age. That it is to the premillennial advent of the Saviour this prophecy refers, appears farther obvious, from the commotions and changes by which it is preceded and accompanied: “I will shake the *heavens* and the *earth* and the *sea* and the *dry land*, and I will shake ALL *nations*, and the Desire of all nations *shall come*.” As we shall afterwards have occasion to revert to this prophecy, we confine our attention at present to the shaking of *all nations*. At the Saviour’s first appearance there was nothing which can with propriety be considered as a fulfilment of this extensive prediction. But it corresponds perfectly with all the predictions concerning the troublous period of the Saviour’s premillennial coming; and in this respect also corresponds

with his own prediction already referred to. His Return is to be at a time of “*distress of nations* with perplexity.” (Luke xxi. 25.) From these various circumstances, the prophecy must be considered as predicting the future erection of a Temple, the splendour of which will, by the more profuse use of silver and gold, not only excel that of the Second Temple, which, in the eyes of those who had seen the first, was “in comparison of it as nothing;” but which shall transcend the glory even of the First, the remembrance of whose superiority over the second called forth their pious regret.

To this Temple and its ordinances the prophets make frequent allusions when speaking of Millennial times. Such is the case in the following prediction by Jeremiah: “For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me to *offer burnt-offerings and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.*” Jer. xxxiii. 17, 18. “Shall never” from the period to which the prophecy relates, and this is when “Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely;” when the Seed of David shall sit upon the throne of the House of Israel,” and the Branch of Righteousness “shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.” ver. 15, 16. These are clearly the characteristics of the Millennial age; and from this period the priests shall continually offer sacrifice. The temple shall no more thence be thrown down, the altar no more defiled. The priests shall “do sacrifice continually,” and the sacrifices shall consist both of “burnt-offerings and meat-offerings.”

But the fullest account which we have of this Temple, and of its ordinances, is contained in that remarkable prophecy with which the book of Ezekiel concludes, and to which we have repeatedly referred. In it, the size and situation of the House are declared, its ground-plan and elevations minutely described, its varied ornaments graphically delineated, its ministering priesthood appointed, and its ritual formally prescribed. The account of these occupies several chapters, of which the most eminent Antimillenarian commentators decline giving any exposition, considering them as inexplicable; while all admit that they have not hitherto met their accomplishment, but refer to

future times.* Now the great source of the difficulty experienced is, a disbelief of the truths these chapters contain. They will not admit the re-erection of the Temple; and, to those who deny this, it is not wonderful that a plain declaration of the fact, and a minute detail of its circumstances, should appear incomprehensible. But to any who are not prepossessed with an opinion of the correctness of a system with which any interpretation of these chapters must be incompatible, and who are not resolved to continue so, these statements will appear remarkably precise. They bear internal evidence of being the very directions according to which the Temple is to be built and its institutions regulated.

Some commentators have indeed exercised their wonted ingenuity in vainly endeavouring to transform, by the process of *spiritualization*, all the parts of the building described, and all its enjoined institutions, into something pertaining to, and extending over the whole Christian Church. This however is a violation of every principle of decorum in the interpretation, and an oversight of the most pointed statements in the prophecy. It is expressly given to the children of Israel, and limited by territorial marks to the land of Palestine. In vision, the prophet was brought from Babylon "into the *Land of Israel*," that the Temple, &c. might be shown unto him. (Ezek. xl. 2.) He is commanded to *declare* "all that thou seest to the *house of Israel*." (xl. 4.) Farther, "thou son of man, *show the House* to the *house of Israel*, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and **LET THEM MEASURE THE PATTERN.** And

* It is due to the eminent Mr Faber to state, that while he strenuously opposes the doctrine of Christ's personal premillennial advent, he does not deny the literal re-erection of the Temple. He even goes the length of admitting, that, "during the Millennial period, there may possibly shine forth, as of old, the glory of the Shechinah, in the temple of the restored and converted Jews at Jerusalem. To this supposition, *as a conjecture*," he continues, "I am not disinclined: though its truth, I apprehend, is incapable of *antecedent demonstration*. We can only say, that, as various prophecies may seem to intimate some such matter: so it would in itself, be perfectly agreeable to the analogy of the two former dispensations. Patriarchism and Judaism, each during its earlier period, had the permanent glory of the Shechinah. Whence we might infer that Christianity, during its best and most triumphant period, would not want the same perpetual and sensible attestation of the divine presence." *Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, Vol. III. p. 475.

if they be ashamed of all that they have done, *show them the form of the House*, and the fashion thereof, and the goings-out thereof, and the comings-in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, *that THEY may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.*" (xlvi. 10, 11.) Again, "the Lord said unto me, son of man, *mark well*, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee *concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord*, and all the laws thereof, and mark well the entering-in of the House, with every going-forth of the Sanctuary. And thou shalt say to *the rebellious*, even to the *House of Israel*, thus saith the Lord God, O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations." (xlvi. 5, 6.) From these it is sufficiently evident that *whatever* this House may be, it belongs not to the Gentile Church, but to the *rebellious* Israel, when they shall cease from all their *abominations*, and that it is to be in the "*Land of Israel*." And we have accordingly seen that in the New Division of the Holy Land—whose boundaries, as already noticed, are marked by known *towns, rivers, and seas*,—*space is left* to be occupied by the Sanctuary. Now if that be a real Division yet to be made of Palestine, (which we hold to be quite incontrovertible,) must not that be a *literal* Sanctuary which requires ground on which to stand?* What other meaning can possibly be attached to the Temple being built in a portion of that Holy Oblation of the Land which is situated between the lots of Judah and Benjamin, and annexed to which is a possession of the priests, which "*shall be a place for their houses*;" and the first-fruits of which land they shall not be allowed to "*sell*," "*exchange*," nor "*alienate*"? (xlviii.

* Mr. Mason believes that the Holy Land is yet to be greatly enlarged, and points out (Gentiles' Fulness, p. 128,) with much care and accuracy its extent, from various passages of the Divine word, and among others refers to this vision of Ezekiel. Of the New Division of the Land also, he speaks with perfect confidence, saying, that it "*must be yet to come*." In that division, however, a portion of land being actually left for the site of the "*Sanctuary*," it appears an inconsistency in Mr. M. to deny its erection. What does he suppose is to be the use of that portion of the Holy Oblation where "*the Sanctuary shall be in the midst of it?*"

7—23. xlv. 1—4.) Surely if this be a literal *land*, it *must* be a literal Sanctuary that is built upon it.

Every thing in the description of the prophet confirms the view of its being a literal temple. It is minute and circumstantial even to an astonishing degree. Outside the House there is to be a *wall* of “one reed,” or about eleven feet in height. The several sides of the House are described, and their peculiarities are set forth. Its courts, its chambers, and its porches, are all measured; the number of these chambers, their windows, and their stairs, are enumerated; and the minute particularity is observable, that while to one court there are *eight* steps, in another case the number is only *seven*; (xl. 26, 31,) and some of “the windows were covered.” (xli. 16.) This minuteness is indeed maintained throughout; and, among other instances, may be noticed the circumstance that the people shall not return through the same gate by which they enter; (xlvi. 9.) and “the gate of the *inner* court that looketh toward the *east*, shall be *shut* the *six working days*; but on the *Sabbath* it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.” (xlvi. 1.)

There is a general similarity in the different fronts of the House, but in the north side there is this peculiarity, that “the chambers and the entries thereof, were by the posts of the gates where they *washed* the *burnt-offering*. And in the porch of the gate were *two tables* on this side, and *two tables* on that side, *to slay thereon* the burnt-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering. And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, were *two tables*; and on the other side, which was at the porch of the gate, were *two tables*; *four tables* were on this side, and *four tables* on that side, by the side of the gate, *eight tables* whereupon *they slew their sacrifices*. And the four tables were of *hewn stone* for the burnt-offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, [22 ft. 9 in.] and one cubit high, [22 in.] whereupon also they *laid the instruments* wherewith they *slew* the burnt-offering and the sacrifice. And within were *hooks*, an hand broad, fastened round about; and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering.” (xl. 38—43.) Do such descriptions admit of any other than a literal interpretation? But farther, that which is more properly called the temple, is to

be 74 feet long ("40 cubits"), by 37 broad ("20 cubits"). The size of the Holy of Holies is about 37 feet square: "So he measured the length thereof, 20 cubits, and the breadth 20 cubits before the temple; and he said unto me, this is the Most Holy place." (xli. 4.) There is also a series of 90 chambers, forming three flats: "And the side chambers were three, one over another, and 30 in order; and they entered into the wall which was of the house for the side chambers round about that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the House. And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers, for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house." (xli. 6, 7.) The foundations of these chambers is specially noticed: (xli. 8;) "The foundations of the side chambers were a full reed of six *great cubits*"—referring to the size of the sacred cubit here used, being "a cubit and a hand breadth." (Ezek. xl. 5.) which make 22 inches, while the common cubit is reckoned at 18. "And before the chambers was a *walk*, of ten cubits breadth [19 feet] inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors *toward the north*. Now the upper chambers were shorter, [lower in the roof,] for the *galleries* were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building. For they were in *three stories*, but *had not pillars* as the pillars of the courts; therefore the building was straightened more than the lowest and middlemost from the ground." (xlii. 4—6.) "He measured the House an hundred cubits long; [183 feet;] and the *separate place*, and the building with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long." (xli. 13.) Then he said unto me, The *north* chambers and the *south* chambers, which are before the *separate place*, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the Lord shall *eat* the most holy things; there shall they *lay* the most holy things, and the meat-offering, and the sin-offering and the trespass-offering; for the place is holy. When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the outer court, but there they shall lay *their garments* wherein they minister, for they are holy; and shall put on *other garments*, and shall approach to those things which are for the people." (xlii. 13, 14.) The whole square is enclosed with "a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, [rather more than a mile,]

and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the Sanctuary and the profane [or common] place." (xlii. 20.) Again we ask, Do such descriptions admit of any other than a literal interpretation? And are we left at liberty to choose whether we shall believe or disbelieve in the truth of such statements?

The ordinances of the altar follow: to the more immediate ministrations of which all the Levites are not to be admitted henceforth, that honour being reserved to a particular order: The "Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity: Yet they shall be Ministers in my Sanctuary, *having charge at the gates of the House*, and ministering to the House; they shall *slay the burnt-offerings* and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them, before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord God, and they shall bear their iniquity. And *they shall not come near* unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my *holy* things, in the Most Holy place; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed; but I will make them keepers of the charge of the House, for all the service thereof and for all that shall be done therein. But the priests, the Levites, *the sons of Zadok*, that *kept* the charge of my Sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, *they shall come near* to my table to minister unto me, and *they shall keep* my charge.... and they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And *in controversy* they shall stand in judgment; and *they shall judge* it according to my judgments.... And ye shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession. They shall eat the meat-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering: and *every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs*. And the first of all the first-fruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priests'." (xlii. 10—30.) According to the plan of spiritualizing, the Levites, we presume, will be the Christian *ministers*. But if so, how is it that only a cer-

tain portion of these ministering priests are to be allowed to perform certain of the services? How is this honour reserved for the sons of Zadok, and how conferred upon them as a reward for services which Gentile ministers never have performed nor will be allowed to do?

From the directions concerning the ordinances of the altar, (which differ materially from those under the Mosaic economy,) we do not quote at length. But on what principle their *reality* can be questioned it is difficult to conceive. Every circumstance bears testimony to the fact so generally disbelieved, or rather, perhaps, so little known. It is impossible to suppose directions so minute and specific as are here contained, to be altogether destitute of precise and positive injunction. Of nothing else but of real sacrifice can we understand the ordinance of “*one lamb* out of the flock of *two hundred*, out of the fat pastures of Israel, for a meat-offering, and for a burnt-offering, and for peace-offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord God. All the *people of the land* shall give this oblation for THE PRINCE in Israel.” (xlv. 15, 16.) How else than literally are such injunctions as the following to be understood? “Thou shalt *daily* prepare a burnt-offering unto the Lord, of a *lamb* of the *first year* without blemish; thou shalt prepare it *every morning*. And thou shalt prepare a *meat-offering* for it *every morning*, the sixth part of an ephah and the third part of an hin of oil, *to temper with the fine flour*; a meat-offering, continually, by a *perpetual ordinance*, unto the Lord. Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat-offering, and the oil *every morning*, for a continual burnt-offering.” (xlvi. 13—15.)

The right of *ministering* in this Temple belongs exclusively to those of the *circumcision*. And it deserves the consideration of those who would spiritualize both priests and sacrifices, how this right is preserved to those of the *literal circumcision*. There is a *circumcision of heart* frequently spoken of in scripture, and is here also expressly required. But this is not all, for “thus saith the Lord, No stranger, uncircumsised in heart NOR uncircumcised IN FLESH shall enter into my Sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.” (xliv. 9.) Corresponding with this, the particularity with which the various departments preparatory to, and connected with

sacrifice are specified may be noticed: "After, he brought me through *the entry* which was at the side of the gate into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the *north*; and behold there was a place on the two sides *westward*. Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests *shall boil* the trespass-offering, and the sin-offering, where they *shall bake* the meat-offering, *that they bear them not out into the outer court* to sanctify the people." And having then been shown four courts, the prophet adds, "and there was a row of building round about in them, round about *them four*, and it was made with *boiling places* under the rows round about. Then said he unto me, These are the places of them that boil where the Ministers of the house shall *boil the sacrifice* of the people." (xlvi. 19—24.) "And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord God, These are the ordinances of the altar *in the day when they shall make it*, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon." (xliii. 18.) It is also worthy of notice that provision is made for the change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the *eighth* or first day: "Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be, that, upon the *eighth day and so forward*, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God." (xliii. 26, 27.) Concerning this temple we have seen it is the promise of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, "I will fill this house with glory;" "and I looked," says Ezekiel, "and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, and I fell upon my face." (xliv. 4.)

Once more let us ask, can all this be viewed as intimation of any thing else than the re-erection of the literal Temple, and the re-institution of sacrifice? We are not unaware of the arguments which have been founded on certain expressions in the Epistles; nor do we seek to conceal the fact that these expressions, *taken by themselves*, do seem to countenance the opinion that the ritual observances were only designed to continue until the introduction of Christianity. But it is to be remarked, that, in such cases, the argument is generally directed against *the abuse* of these ordinances; and expressions used, perhaps, con-

cerning that abuse, may seem to bear against the continuance of the ordinances themselves. But it would not at all affect the question concerning *Millennial* sacrifice, even if it could be satisfactorily established that the observance of the *Mosaic* ritual was authoritatively discontinued after the death of Christ. The re-institution of worship by Sacrifice is, as we have seen, distinctly predicted, and the time when it will be so is not less clearly foretold. Whatever therefore has been God's will concerning the past, his purpose relative to the *future* at least, is here explicitly revealed. But in reality we do not find *any* authoritative abolition of sacrifice in the New Testament; while the known practice of believing Jews generally, and of holy apostles in particular, demonstrate that there is in sacrifice itself nothing incompatible with the nature of Christianity. So long as the Temple stood—that is, so long as it was possible to offer sacrifice agreeably to the prescribed will of Heaven—so long did Jews converted to the faith of Jesus continue to present their offerings according to the law.* It is said of those who witnessed the Saviour's ascension, that they afterwards “returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were *continually in the temple*, praising and blessing God.” Luke xxiv. 53. Do we not read, that, *nearly thirty years after*, James and the Elders of Jerusalem thus addressed the apostle Paul? “Thou seest, brother, how *many thousands* of the Jews there are *which believe*, and *they are ALL zealous of the law*.” Acts xxi. 20. We read also of Paul himself, shortly before this, “*having shorn his head*, in Cenchrea, for *he had a vow*.” Acts xviii. 18. And when a *false* rumour had been circulated, that this apostle “taught the Jews which are among the Gentiles to *forsake* Moses, saying that they *ought not* to circumcise their children, *neither to walk after the customs*,” upon the suggestion of James and of the elders of Jerusalem, to evidence the falsehood of those things of which they had been informed concerning him, and that “*all*” might know

* “These were practised by the Apostles themselves ; constantly by such as lived in Judea, and occasionally by the rest. *The real fault* [of certain Jewish zealots condemned by Paul] *was the depending upon them for salvation*, in opposition to the grace of Christ.” HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, published by the London Tract Society. vol. i. p. 23.

"that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law," did he not join immediately in charges with other four disciples *under vow*? (Acts xxi. 20—26) and "purifying himself with them, entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them"—the sacrifices, in such cases, including both lambs and rams. (Numb. vi. 14, 15.) When his Christian friends at Ephesus pressed him "to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, *I must*, by all means, *keep this feast* that cometh, in Jerusalem." Acts xviii. 20, 21. And when falsely accused before Felix of having, *contrary to the law*, introduced Gentiles into the inner court of the Temple, he denied the charge, saying, "I came to bring alms to my nation, *and offerings*, whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me *purified* in the Temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult." Acts xxiv. 17, 18. And when afterwards sent prisoner to Rome, he could still aver to "the chief of *the Jews*" there, that he had "committed *nothing* against the people or *customs* of our fathers." Acts xxviii. 17.

Thus then we find that Jewish converts to Christianity, including eminent apostles, did not on their conversion deem it necessary to abandon the institutions of Moses. Nor can this be imputed to their ignorance of the spirituality of the New dispensation. Paul was not unacquainted with "the genius of the gospel," nor unskilled in its minutest requirements. But we are here met by objectors with the assertion that Paul's conduct in this respect was merely to conciliate the affection of his brethren, the Jews. And was conciliation to be purchased at the expense of an entire departure from *Christian* principle by "many thousands" of believers also? Or was Paul one of those who would sacrifice the truth to a false principle of expediency? No, no. Willing as he was, for the good of others, to yield up his own convenience, his comfort, his liberty, his life itself, he deprecated as unlawful the principle of doing "evil that good may come," and charged with "slander" those who imputed it unto him. (Rom. iii. 8.) Had the apostle's only reason for following the law of Moses been a desire to yield to the prejudices of the Jews, on what principle are we to understand his refusal to bring *Gentile* converts un-

der a similar obligation? No less strenuously was this insisted for, by Jewish converts, than their being allowed themselves to adhere unto the law. But Paul and all the other apostles peremptorily rejected this demand. (Acts xv. 24.) So also while Paul, in compliance with the desire of the Jews, “took and *circumcised*” Timothy, “the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed;” when it was demanded that Titus should submit to the same rite, to those who required this, the Apostle “gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour,” Titus “being a Greek.” Acts xvi. 1. Gal. ii. 3—5. The apostle must therefore have been influenced by another principle besides that of pleasing the Jews—a principle which led him to distinguish between the Jew and the Greek, exempting the one from an ordinance he imposed on the other. And where then is the evidence of the entire and authoritative abolition of sacrifice, and its incompatibility with the Gospel of Christ? And if believing Jews, *under the gospel*, thus adhered to the law of Moses so long as the Temple stood, on what ground do we “reject the testimony of God” by His prophets, of the future re-erection of the Temple and the re-institution of its ordinances?

In the 51st Psalm we have a prediction, not only of a time when sacrifice would not be demanded, but also of the time of its re-institution. While Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Temple is laid low, Jewish believers are deprived of all opportunity of thus adhering to the law; but when they shall be restored to their own land, and the Temple is re-erected, it shall be otherwise. Israel in their captivity say, “O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou [at present] desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. THEN shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness; with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offerings: THEN shall they offer BULLOCKS upon thine altar.” Psalm li. 15—19.

The last circumstance we here notice concerning this future Temple is, that in it a *New River* is to have its

source : "Afterwards he brought me again unto the door of the House," says the prophet, "and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the House, *Eastward*, (for the *fore front* of the House [its proper *front*] stood *toward the east*,) and the waters came down from under, from the *right* side of the House, at the *south* side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate *northward*, and led me about the way without unto the *outer gate* by the way that looketh *eastward*; and behold there ran out waters on the *right* side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth *eastward*, he measured a thousand cubits, [fully one-third of a mile,] and he brought me through the waters; the waters were *to the ankles*. Again he measured a [second] thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were *to the knees*. Again he measured a [third] thousand, and brought me through; the waters were *to the loins*. Afterward he measured a [fourth] thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters *to swim in*, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me and caused me to return to *the brink* of the river. Now when I had returned, behold at *the bank* of the river were very many trees, on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out *toward the east country*, and go down into *the desert*, [of Tekoah, apparently] and go into the Sea; [the *Dead Sea*, the northern extremity of which lies nearly due *east* from Jerusalem,] which being brought forth into the sea, *the waters shall be healed*. And it shall come to pass that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live; and there shall be a *very great number of fish*, because these waters shall come thither; *for they shall be healed*; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that *the fishers* shall stand upon it, *from Engedi even unto Eneglaim*; they shall be a place to spread forth *nets*; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the Great Sea, exceeding many."* Ezek. xlvi. 1—10.

* The value of this prediction of the future productiveness of the Dead Sea will be best appreciated by those acquainted with the perfect contrast which its present state exhibits. "Hitherto," says

In citing Zech. xiv. we have already adverted to the earthquake by which the Mount of Olives is to be rent at the coming of the Lord. We are not aware that that prediction has ever been viewed in connection with this prophecy by Ezekiel; yet they appear to reflect light on each other. For if a river is to flow from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, a channel must needs be prepared; and as that sea lies East from Jerusalem, the channel must needs be formed in that direction. Now the waters of the New River, are to “issue out toward the *East country*, and go down into the *Desert*, and go into the Sea;”—but the Mount of Olives “is before Jerusalem, on the *East*,” and it might therefore naturally have been expected that through it a channel should have been made, even if there had been no intimation to that effect. But not only are we informed that this mountain “shall cleave in the midst thereof,” but that the rent made will be in the very direction requisite for the course of the River above referred to. It shall “cleave in the midst thereof, *toward the East* and *toward the West*.” By this, “a very great valley” shall be formed, a valley which “shall reach unto Azal;” for “half of the mountain shall remove toward the *North*, and half of it toward the *South*.” Zech. xiv. 1—5. Were any thing farther requisite to confirm the correspondence noticed, it may be found in the fact that this very prediction of Zechariah is immediately followed by a similar declaration, concerning this New River, containing the additional fact of its waters being divided, and forming two distinct rivers running in opposite directions, the second flowing into the *Western Sea*, or Mediterranean: “And it shall be in that day, that living waters, [waters always springing and running,] shall

the well-informed Editor of the “Modern Traveller,” after a careful examination of the most recent and authentic testimony on the subject;—“hitherto, we are without any satisfactory evidence that the Lake contains *any* living creatures,” even the lowest species of shell-fish not excepted. *Palestine*, p. 219. For thousands of years the Jordan has rolled its flood of fertile freshness into the bosom of this Asphaltite Lake, daily conveying thither millions of tons, and still it remains *unhealed* as ever. The extreme and bitter saltiness of its waters continues a lasting token of Divine indignation against sin, and exhibits a striking memorial of Heaven’s out-poured wrath, which overwhelmed the guilty cities of the plain. But when the predicted stream shall mingle with the waters of the Lake, those waters shall be “healed,” and yield variety of fish, “exceeding many.”

go out from Jerusalem, *half* of them toward the former sea, [the *eastern* or Dead Sea,] and half of them toward the hinder sea (the *western* or Mediterranean sea) : in summer and in winter shall it be." Zech. xiv. 8. Of that which flows into the East or Dead Sea, it is here said "the fishers shall stand upon it, from Engedi even unto Eneglaim." Ezek. xlvi. 9. The latter place is not elsewhere mentioned in Scripture; but Engedi is a well-known port on the west side of the Dead Sea, in lat. 31 deg. 25 min. north; lon. 35 deg. 40 min. east. (Josh. xv. 62.) This Eastern river, then, having its source in Jerusalem, appears to flow through the desert of Tekoah, (lying directly in the river's course when it has changed to the south-eastern direction in going "*down* into the desert,") till it disembogues itself into the Dead Sea, at Engedi.*

SECTION XIV.

THE NATIONS COMING TO WORSHIP IN JERUSALEM.

THE Redeemer having, with wonderful condescension, deigned to dwell with men, and his Temple being rebuilt

* The Rev. Mr. Mason, in his Gentiles' Fulness, almost seems to admit—as it will be difficult for any one after carefully reading the 41st and following chapters of Ezekiel to deny—that the Jewish Temple shall yet be re-erected, as he refers, (page 134,) to "*the duties and provision of their priests,*" so minutely described by the prophet. But he afterwards censures severely a writer for expressly declaring this, and for maintaining the waters to be *real* which are thus represented as having their source in the Sanctuary. But if the Sanctuary itself be *real*, (and every thing in the description forbids any other interpretation,) how else are we to explain the waters which the prophet saw issuing from under *its threshold*—forming a stream, to observe the course of which he was brought without the outer gate—which gradually enlarged in its progress, from ankle depth till it became an impassable river—the waters of which abounded with fish of various kinds, and whose banks were covered with fruit-bearing trees—which flowed down through the desert till it emptied itself into the sea,—and, on a certain portion of which fishermen were employed in spreading forth their nets? The rise of this river is also predicted by the prophet Joel: "And a fountain shall come forth of the House of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." Joel iii. 18.

in Jerusalem, the nations are represented as coming to worship before him. A prediction to this effect is given in precisely the same terms by the prophets Isaiah (ii. 2, 3,) and Micah : “ But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of *the House of the Lord* shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; *and people shall flow into it*; and *many nations* shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and *to the House of the God of Jacob*; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and *the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*” Micah iv. 1, 2. In this prediction, “*the House* of the God of Jacob” and “*the mountain* of the House of the Lord” are both considered by many as *the church*; and the “nations” and “people” coming thither, as those becoming members of it. Were we even to look no farther than to the words quoted, this would appear an unnatural interpretation of the passage, and when viewed together with its context it becomes at once inadmissible. The quotation we have made is evidently a contrast to something previously declared : “*But in the last days* it shall come to pass,” &c. There are here two marks of contrast; “but,” in contradistinction to something formerly mentioned, “it shall come to pass;” and “in the *last days*” circumstances shall differ from those at another period also referred to previously. These points of contrast have been unskillfully separated in our translation, by placing them in different chapters; but by looking at the last verses of the preceding chapter the meaning of those quoted will instantly appear. That chapter contains an exposure of the hypocrisy of the “heads of *the house of Jacob*, and princes of *the house of Israel*,” and a threatening is denounced of coming desolation on their land : “ They build up Zion with blood, [this is not *the church* certainly,] and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us. Therefore [on account of this their iniquity] shall Zion for your sake be *plowed as a field*, and Jerusalem shall become *heaps*, and the mountain of *the House* as the high places of the forest. *But* in the *last*

days," &c. Thus, then, we see that it was the literal "Jerusalem" and "Zion" and "mountain of the House," which, for the sin of Israel, were to be "ploughed" and laid in "heaps," and they have literally been so. And it is in contrast to their present state that from the same "Jerusalem" and "Zion" and "House of the Lord," the word of the Lord shall again go forth, and to which "in the last days" *many nations shall come*. This shall be at the Millennium, for then "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." ver. 3.

Again, "At that time, they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and *all the nations* shall be gathered *unto it* to the Name [the incarnate *Word?*] of the Lord, *to Jerusalem*; neither shall they walk *any more* after the imaginations of their evil heart." Jer. iii. 17. This is when "the house of *Judah* shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come *together* out of the *land of the north*," to their own land; "and at that time, they shall call Jerusalem *the throne of the Lord*." It is, therefore, at the restoration of Israel, and after the conversion of "all the nations;" for "neither shall *they* walk *any more* after the imaginations of their evil heart."

So also, by the prophet Zechariah, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass that there shall come people, and the *inhabitants of many cities*; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, *Let us go speedily to pray* before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Yea, *many people and strong nations* shall *come to seek* the Lord of hosts in *Jerusalem*, and to *pray before* the Lord." Zech. viii. 20—22. These inhabitants of "*many cities*" shall go not to the church merely, for in doing so they would not need to *leave* their cities. But, stirring up each other, "*the inhabitants of one city shall go to another*," seeking their company in going to "*Jerusalem*"; whither they shall go together "*to seek* the Lord of hosts," and "*to pray before* the Lord"—plainly implying his presence there. And that it is the literal Jerusalem is farther evident from the honour they shall put on *the Jews*: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that *ten men* shall take hold (out of *all languages* of the nations,) even shall take

hold of the skirt of him that is *a Jew*, saying, We will go *with you*: for we have heard that God is with you." ver. 23.

In a psalm containing decided references to the restoration of Israel and the Millennial period, it is said, "Because of thy Temple at *Jerusalem* shall kings *bring presents* unto thee;" then "princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Ps. lxviii. 29, 31. The very reason of these "kings" going to Jerusalem is *because* God's "Temple" will be there.

The attendance of the nations at the regular and stated feasts, the Lord expressly declares by the prophet Isaiah: "It shall come that I will gather *all nations* and tongues; and they *shall come* and see my glory....and it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Is. lxvi. 18, 23. Although in these words Jerusalem is not named, yet is it plainly implied: "They shall *come*,"—but whither? The prophecy itself furnishes us with the answer. Referring to the restoration of Israel, it is said, (ver. 19, 20.) the Gentiles "shall *bring all your brethren*." Now this *bringing* must be to the same place as the *coming* of the nations, since both imply a movement to the place occupied by the speaker. Therefore if we can ascertain whither the Gentiles shall "bring" the prophet's "brethren," this will be the place to which the nations "shall come" to worship. Now, the former place is distinctly mentioned as being *Jerusalem*: they shall *bring* them, saith the Lord, "to my holy mountain *Jerusalem*." And all shall come thither to worship from Sabbath to Sabbath—there shall be continually from all parts of the earth worshippers attending upon the appointed feasts.

But the most explicit prediction on this subject is that with which the Prophecies of Zechariah conclude, and to which we formerly alluded: "It shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against *Jerusalem* [after Israel's restoration] shall even *go up, from year to year, to worship the King*, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that *whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth UNTO JERUSALEM to worship the King the Lord of hosts*, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of

Egypt go not up and come not, (that have no rain,) there shall be *the plague*, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and *the punishment of all nations* that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**; and the pots in the Lord's House shall be like the bowls before the altar. *Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah* shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and *all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them*, and seethe therein; and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the House of the Lord of Hosts." Zech. xiv. 16—21. This is immediately subsequent to the future attack of the confederated nations upon Jerusalem after the restoration of Israel, when "the city shall be *taken*, and the *houses* rifled, and the women ravished;" when part of the inhabitants shall be made *captives*, "and the residue of the people shall *not* be cut off from the city." ver. 2. This must therefore be the literal "Jerusalem," and not the church. Having been then rescued from the power of the oppressor by the Saviour's interposition in their behalf, and peace being restored, "there shall be *no more* utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be *safely* inhabited." ver. 11. Now it is to this same Jerusalem that "the nations which came against" it shall come up "to worship the King;" and this King is "the Lord of hosts." Each of these nations shall go up to Jerusalem, "from year to year;" but this does not imply that every *individual* shall do so—although this has sometimes been asserted, with the view of fixing upon the literal interpretation of the prophecy a charge of absurdity, from the supposed impossibility of its being so accomplished. This is indeed required of "*all the families* of the earth;" yet it is to be observed, that the word "*families*" is not here used in its ordinary and limited sense; but in that more comprehensive signification of *nation* or *people*, attached to it in the promise to Abraham, that in him shall "*all the families* of the earth be blessed." In this sense the kingdom of Judah is called a "*family*," by the prophet Jeremiah: "*them that remain of this evil family*." Jer. viii. 3. But besides its having this meaning in other parts of Scripture, the term is plainly so used in this very

prophecy. Thus, while punishment is denounced against all “the families of the earth” generally, we have its meaning defined by the more particular reference to the case of “*the family of Egypt.*” From this we at once perceive that the term “family” is used for “nation” or “people,” Egypt being here reckoned and styled but *one* “family.” Thus all the *nations* or “families of the earth” may go up to Jerusalem, as they do other things, by representation. Besides such of the people as have the will and the power, (and during the Millennium these will happily be generally conjoined, facilities being doubtless mightily increased,) nations as such will present at Jerusalem their acknowledgment of allegiance to the exalted Jesus, the Great Supreme. From this obligation none will be exempted, and breach of the requirement will be visited with Heaven’s chastisements of different kinds. This diversity of punishment also proves that the prophecy is to be literally interpreted. Such nations as refuse or neglect to come up to Jerusalem, “upon them *shall be no rain.*” But as this would not be a punishment to any country which does not enjoy or stand in need of the refreshing shower, so if “Egypt go not up and come not, that have no rain, [being watered by the periodical overflowings of the Nile,] there shall be *the plague* wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.” Here we find that literal punishment must be meant on literal countries, since it is thus adapted to the diversified circumstances of transgressors. In this then we have additional evidence of the fact that when in the Land of Israel, the House of the Lord shall be built, men shall come thither from every clime to adore the blessed Saviour, the then acknowledged “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

SECTION XV.

REVIEW OF PROMISES OF THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD ON EARTH.

IN perusing the preceding pages, or reading generally the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Millennium, it is remarkable with what frequency the Messiah is introduced

as David or The Beloved, the Root and Branch of Jesse, The Lord, The Lord our Righteousness, The Redeemer, The Lord of Hosts, The Prince, The King, and The King of Israel; of His being with and amongst His people—and of His reigning over and in the midst of them in Zion and in Jerusalem. And not only is His presence promised, but it is spoken of as being the highest glory and best enjoyment of that bliss which are the peculiar characteristics of the era to which they refer. Indeed, from the circumstances with which they are connected, many of these predictions appear altogether incomprehensible, if the personal presence of the Redeemer is denied. Nor can any sufficient reason be assigned for substituting the presence of *the Spirit* as an equivalent for the promised presence of Emmanuel—"The King of Israel." The copious effusion of the influences of the Spirit, and the general holiness of men is, as we have already noticed, the subject of *another* gracious promise for "that day," and ought not to be confounded with, nor merged into, that which now forms the subject of more immediate investigation. To do so is not merely offering violence to the language of Scripture, but doing this without the shadow of necessity. The prophecies present a view of the Messiah's character and work, full, clear, and consistent; stated with so much plainness, and so oft repeated, as to leave room for wonder that his personal presence ever could have been so explained away. The language, as left by the Holy Ghost, seems to stand in need of no amendment—no accommodation; nay is quite irreconcileable with the accommodations usually made. A short review of some of these promises, given in few words, and arranged in order, will fully substantiate this statement,—a careful examination of their several contexts will prove the whole to be unfulfilled predictions. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Ps. cii. 16. "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt." Is. xix. 1. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy as a man of war." Is. xlvi. 13. "The Lord of hosts shall come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.... and passing over Jerusalem he will defend it." Isa. xxxi. 4, 5. "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury,

and his rebuke with flames of fire." Is. lxvi. 15. He is also seen, by the holy prophet, coming "from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength," "treading down the people in his fury, and staining his raiments with their blood."^{*} Is. lxiii. 1, 6. "Yet," says the Lord, "have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. ii. 6. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." Isa. lix. 20. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, lo! I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." Zech. ii. 10. "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Isa. ix. 2. "The Lord will be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." Is. ix. 20. "And, behold, the Glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and His voice was like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory." Ezek. xlivi. 2. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." Zech. xiv. 4. In the days when "Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely," as King shall the Lord our Righteousness "reign and prosper, executing judgment and justice in the earth." Jer. xxiii. 5. "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment!" for "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Is. xxxii. 1. Zech. xiv. 5. He shall then be "Governor," not only over, but "among the nations." Ps. xxii. 28. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name One." Zech. xiv. 9. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Isa. xxiv. 23. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the Name of the Lord to Jerusalem." Jer. iii. 17. "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord." Zech. viii. 22.

* This passage has sometimes been applied to the first advent of Christ, and the sufferings He himself endured. But this is an application which it does not admit. He treads his enemies in his *anger*—he tramples *them* in his *fury*,—and his garments are sprinkled with *their* blood.

SECTION XVI.

THE LITERAL FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

IN preceding Sections, we have endeavoured to prove, from the very nature of most of the predictions adduced, that they are only capable of a literal interpretation. Advancing in the argument, we now farther observe, that to explain away all the predictions concerning the *glory* of Christ, is to justify his rejection by the Jews, notwithstanding of the plain declarations of his humility and sufferings. For, if we are at liberty to spiritualize all the prophecies which foretell his reign in glory, how can we blame them for adopting a similar mode of interpreting other predictions not more clear and far less numerous? Besides, this is a method of interpretation which seems not only repugnant to reason, but is quite inconsistent with that Literal Fulfilment which Prophecy has hitherto received. If all past predictions, except where figures are obviously used, have had their fulfilment *literally*, even when the minuteness of Prophecy was extreme, on what principle of interpretation is a mode of fulfilment yet unprecedented now to be expected? We can point to a long series of predictions which have been literally fulfilled, and to others which are being so at this very day, in their utmost minutiae, and can see no reason to suppose, that those which, for aught we can tell, may relate to the ensuing month or the ensuing year, are not to have a literal fulfilment also, as no intimation is given by the Spirit of Prophecy of a period at which this mode of their accomplishment shall cease. Thus alone can the criterion divinely given, by which to distinguish the *true* from the *false* prophet, be of any avail: "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath *not* spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." Deut. xxvii. 21, 22. And the minuteness with which Prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled, proves how safely the rule may be applied. The past dealings of God in this respect—which show the perfect correspondence between the prediction and its accom-

plishment—have however been much neglected ; and hence, perhaps, the unwillingness so often displayed, believably to receive the promises He has bestowed, without the intervention of our own limitations ; and hence, also, our unbelieving fears to submit divine predictions concerning the future to the ordeal which Jehovah himself has prescribed.

But of the evidence to be derived from the past fulfilment of Prophecy, did our limits permit the prosecution of this branch of the argument, the history of nations and of individuals would furnish abundant and valuable illustration. We might take the Scripture predictions concerning the state of different countries, and show how amply they are verified by the accounts of recent travellers, wholly unconscious of the coincidence,—and, in some cases, with views decidedly hostile to Revelation. Or, taking History as evidence, we might trace the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy in the rise and fall of empires—the scenes of their splendour, and the means of their overthrow. We might refer to the judgments poured on cities famed of old, and in the height of their glory when denounced of the Lord ;—of Nineveh, of Babylon, of Tyre, of Jerusalem, and others : and might gather thence evidence incontrovertible of the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy, in circumstances the most improbable to human foresight—by means the most unlikely in human estimation—and with a specification of incidents so apparently insignificant, as would, perhaps, never have been recorded had not the minds of historians been under the immediate control of Him whose omniscience they thus unwittingly attested. The very improbability of such prophecies ever being fulfilled renders their accomplishment a more glorious display of that divine attribute which Jehovah claims as peculiarly his own, and in proof of which he even appeals to prophecy. Some, who have not inquired upon the subject, are apt to imagine, that, although intimations of a general nature have been given, particular circumstances are not condescended upon. This opinion, however, is far from being correct. There is often a perfect delineation of inferior circumstances, and this, in some instances, to a degree altogether astonishing ; as when, in picturing forth Idumean desolation, the prediction includes the provision of a mate for every vulture : “There shall the vultures also be gathered, *every one with her mate.*

Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord and read, no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate ; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them."

Is. xxxiv. 15, 16.

These remarks derive much confirmation from a recent publication by the Rev. Alexander Keith, entitled, "Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy;" from which, did our limits permit, we should gladly have availed ourselves of extracts.* But for the illustration of our views, we prefer making a selection of Scripture predictions concerning the humiliation of Christ, with reference to their Fulfilment.

The patriarch Jacob had left the consolatory assurance that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh came ; (Gen. xliv. 10;) and, accordingly, it was not till about the time Christ publicly appeared in the temple, in the twelfth year of His age, that the last king, Archilaus, was dethroned and banished. The Redeemer was not only to be of the tribe of Judah, but of the family of David; and his genealogy, both by natural and legal succession, have, in Scripture, been preserved as evidence. Mat. i. Luke iii. Isaiah predicted that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son; and, in due time, the fulfilment of the glorious prophecy was attested to Mary's espoused husband by an angel from heaven. Is. vii. 14. Mat. i. 10. Prophecy had pointed to Bethlehem Ephrata, as the place of His nativity; and two of the evangelists inform us Jesus was born there. Micah v. 2. Mat. ii. 1. Luke ii. 4, 6. The prophet predicted to Jerusalem the approach of her lowly King riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass; and the evangelist records its exact fulfilment, when Jesus so entered the city amid the hosannahs of the multitude. Zech. ix. 9. Matt. xxi. 1. Prophecy declared, "When we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire him;" and we

* Although the author has sometimes endeavoured to find fulfilment for prophecies which have not yet met their accomplishment, we would warmly recommend this work to the perusal of those who have not attended to this branch of the argument. Written for the confutation of the avowed Unbeliever, it is not less calculated to reprove the practical infidelity of real and professed Christians in the absolute verity of divine prediction.

know that “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” Is. liii. 2. John i. 11. It was said by the prophet, “We hid, as it were, our faces from him ;” and the evangelist informs us, “All his disciples forsook him and fled.” Is. liii. 3. Matt. xxvi. 5, 6. The Saviour, in Prophecy, complained of being laughed to scorn ; and his evangelists narrate the contempt with which He was treated ;—“Herod with his men of war set him at nought,” and the Roman soldiers having arrayed him in the emblems of mock royalty, bowed the knee before him in derision. Ps. xxii. 6. Matt. xxvii. 29. Luke xxiii. 11. If he said, “I hid not my face from shame and spitting,” the pen of Inspiration also records that he was thus ignominiously treated. Is. l. 6. Matt. xxvi. 67. Prophecy had foretold, “They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek ;” and its fulfilment was witnessed, when “they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head.” Mic. v. 1. Matt. xxvii. 30. The prophecy is, “he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ;” the fulfilment is, “when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.” Is. liii. 7. Matt. xxvii. 12. The prophet predicted, that he should be “despised and rejected of men :” and when, by their law, a prisoner must be released, the Jews clamorously preferred Barabbas, a robber and murderer, to the Holy Son of God. Is. liii. 3. Mark xv. 15. Did Prophecy pourtray him as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”? He not merely “endured the contradiction of sinners,” but suffered under the hiding of his Father’s face, and in our room experienced the bitterness of divine wrath, till in his agony he sweat blood, and exclaimed that his soul was “exceeding sorrowful even unto death.” Is. liii. 3. Heb. xii. 3. Matt. xxvi. 38. If it was foretold that he who did eat his bread should lift his heel against him; “Jesus answered and said, he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish the same shall betray me.” Ps. xl ix. 1. Matt. xxvi. 23. It was predicted that he should be prized at “thirty pieces of silver ;” and it is also narrated, that Judas covenanted to betray his Master into the hands of His enemies for that sum. Zech. xi. 12. Matt. xxvi. 14, 15. And the Lord said unto the prophet, “Cast it unto the *potter* ;” and when the traitor returned the reward of his treachery to the chief priests,

"they took counsel and bought with it the *potter's* field to bury strangers in." Zech. xi. 13. Matt. xxvii. 7. In Prophecy, the Saviour complained, "they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver him; let Him deliver him, seeing he trusted in Him;" and in the very words did not the chief priests with the scribes and elders "mocking him" say, "He trusted in God, let Him deliver him now if He will have him"? Ps. xxii. 7, 8. Matt. xxvii. 43 In Prophecy, the Saviour complained, "they gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink;" and it was verified when at Golgotha, "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall." Ps. lxix. 21. Matt. xxvii. 34. The prophet foretold, that "threescore and two weeks" of years after the edict for rebuilding Jerusalem, the Messiah should be cut off; (Dan. ix. 26.) and History testifies this to have been the precise time that elapsed between the giving of that decree by Artaxerxes and the death of Christ. If it was promised that he should pour out his soul unto death; Jesus said, "It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." Is. liii. 12. John xix. 30. Though to be put to a violent death, and "cut off out of the land of the living," it was added by the prophets, "but not for himself;" "for the transgression of my people was He smitten:" and accordingly He who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," "bare *our* sins in His own body." Dan. ix. 26. Is. liii. 8. Heb. vii. 27. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Yet the prophet declares, "he was numbered with transgressors;" and the Evangelist records, that "with him they crucified two thieves, the one on his right hand and the other on his left." Is. liii. 12. Mark xv. 27. The prophecy is, "they pierced my hands and feet;" and an incredulous disciple was convinced of the reality of his Master's resurrection, by witnessing in his hands the print of the nails by which he had been transfixed to the accursed tree. Ps. xxii. 16. John xx. 28. Again it was predicted, "they shall look on me whom they have pierced;" and it is also recorded, that "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water." Zech. xii. 10. John xix. 34. If it was farther foretold, "they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," Inspiration also informs us, that in this very manner did the attendant

soldiers divide the Saviour's raiment. Ps. xxii. 18. John. xix. 23. The Passover had typified* and the Psalmist predicted of the Righteous One, that "the Lord keepeth all his bones, not one of them shall be broken;" and the beloved dis-

* It would be altogether inconsistent with our present design to offer any lengthened remarks on the objections made to Mr. Irving's use of the Scriptural Types in establishing the doctrine of the second advent of Messiah, by the Examinator of his Opinions in the Christian Instructor. Types, it must be acknowledged, are rather fitted for illustration than for proof; but there is no sufficient reason why, in this case, that use should not be made of them for which they are said expressly to have been given, and to which they are applied with regard to other doctrines. Still it must be confessed, that as types can only be made available for the illustration of what is already proved and admitted, it would have been better—we say it with all respect for Mr. Irving, to whose uncompromising fidelity we feel ourselves under the highest obligations, in having had our attention more particularly directed to this awfully interesting subject, and take pleasure in having thus an opportunity of making the acknowledgment—it would yet, in our opinion, have been better, in preaching this doctrine to those who wholly disbelieved it, to have kept *more exclusively* to the *direct* proof of its Scriptural authority. But when the Examinator was professedly reviewing Mr. Irving's Lectures, how is it that he has not taken up, fully and formally, a single one of his arguments founded on the express declaration of the divine word? He has enlarged on the unsuitableness of types for the purpose Mr. Irving had in view, and assumes that what was given in illustration was adduced as evidence direct. But on this subject, he has himself made admissions, from which, perhaps, it would not be difficult to prove that much of what he has written upon it is inadmissible. So far from the "general similarity of God's dealings with His creatures in similar circumstances," being a sufficient reason for denying the typical character of certain events, that it might of itself rather be taken as a warrant for that application which Mr. Irving made of the Scriptural reference unto them. For if, as the Examinator says, "almost every thing in Prophecy is made to centre in, and to depend upon the coming of Christ, and the consequences to the world of this coming," is it not highly reasonable to suppose that God in His dealings with individuals and with nations, so ordered His blessings and his judgments as to foreshadow those great events which are yet future, and which are revealed as to be accomplished in latter times, in consequence of Christ's coming to the world? Should not that very similarity, on which the Examinator finds his objection, have led us to the conclusion that God's dealings in one case were designed to point to others of a similar character, though mightier in result, even if the Holy Spirit had not absolutely required this application, by expressly intimating their typical character and ultimate reference?

ciple saw and bears record, that while, at the request of the Jews, the legs of the malefactors were broken, the Saviour being already dead, they brake not His. Ps. xxxiv. 20. John xix. 33. It was predicted that he should be with the rich in the state of the dead ; (Is. liii. 9.) and it is also recorded by the various Evangelists, that Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable councillor, having begged from Pilate the body of Jesus, he wrapped it in fine linen, and laid it in his own new sepulchre, wherein never man before was laid. It was again said, in Prophecy, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;" and early in the morning of the third day his resurrection was declared to his disciples, by an angel whose countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. Ps. xvi. 10. Matt. xxviii. 3. And, lastly, it was prophetically declared, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive;" and so it is recorded, that "while his disciples beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." Ps. lxviii. 18. Acts i. 9. Eph. iv. 8.

The legitimate conclusion from this Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy in times past surely is, that predictions concerning the future will have a similar accomplishment, and that as Jesus was really born of "a virgin," so will he also "come with the clouds of heaven," when there shall be "given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." Is. vii. 14. Dan. vii. 13, 14. That in the day of his power, he will as certainly come to Egypt "riding on a swift cloud," as, in his humiliation, he entered Jerusalem seated on an ass. Is. xix. 1. Zech. ix. 9. That as "the spirit of whoredoms in the midst of Israel" has hitherto blinded them, that "they have not known the Lord," they *shall* "know that the Lord of hosts hath sent" him, when he "shall inherit Judah, his portion in the Holy Land." Hos. v. 5. Zech. ii. 11, 12. That as, when formerly he tabernacled with men, he brake not the bruised reed nor quenched the smoking flax, so shall he yet "go forth as a mighty man, stirring up jealousy like a man of war." Is. xlvi. 3, 13. That as he really submitted to oppression and affliction, while "he opened not his mouth," so will he, in the day of his

fierce anger, “destroy and devour at once.”* Is. liii. 7. xlvi. 14. That as the humble Shiloh truly came ere the sceptre had departed from Judah, so will the Lord when he builds up Zion appear in his glory. Gen. xlvi. 10. Ps. cx. 16. That as, when formerly he appeared in our world, the Jewish nation “saw in him no form nor comeliness,” so will he be “the Desire of all nations” when he comes again. Is. liii. 2. Hag. ii. 7. That as, at his first coming, he was truly “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” he will at his return, “rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in his people.” Is. liii. 3. lxv. 19. That as the children of Israel have really remained “many days without a king and without a prince,” so they will, in the same sense, have this reproach removed, when, in the latter days, they “shall return and seek the Lord their God and *The Beloved, their King.*” Hos. iii. 4, 5. That as he who “is to be Ruler in Israel” was really born in Bethlehem, so, when he has “returned unto Zion he will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.” Micah v. 2. Zech. viii. 3. That as “the city and

* The Examinator already referred to, in the Christian Instructor, (p. 596.) is much opposed to the view of Christ coming personally for the destruction of Antichristian nations, because, during the time of his first residence on earth, the whole of his doctrine and practice inculcated peace. But were this criterion adopted, we must at once deny that the Lord Jesus will *ever* be revealed from heaven, “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and who obey not the gospel.” 2 Thess. i. 8. Another apostle, as well as Christ himself, expressly tells us, that “all the tribes of the earth shall *mourn* when they see him coming in his power and glory; (Rev. i. 7. Matt. xxiv. 30.) but, upon the above principle, there can be no occasion for the most guilty to fear, because, when formerly upon the earth, he said unto his disciples, “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.” Such reasoning proceeds on a very imperfect view of the Saviour’s character. The Examinator does not, however, always adhere to this partial delineation. He repeatedly asserts that Christ came again at the destruction of Jerusalem. This, while it sets at nought his idea of peacefulness as the only ingredient in the character of Christ, appears the more surprising as it is an assertion which the Scriptures do not warrant. Not that this act of his justice was inconsistent with his character of mercy—which would not have been sullied in the least although he had chosen to come personally for the infliction of his vengeance on the guilty city—but the Scriptures do not authorize the Examinator to make such an assertion, and it is in itself subversive of the objection adduced by himself.

the Sanctuary" were really destroyed by "the people of the prince" who came to execute the vengeance of God, so will the House of the Lord of Hosts "be built" again when he is "returned to Jerusalem with mercies." Dan. ix. 26. Zech. i. 16. That as really as his disciples "hid their faces from him" in the hour of his distress, shall "many people and strong nations come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord." Is. liii. 2. Zech. viii. 22. That as on Calvary, he truly "made his soul an offering for sin," so will he reign "in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Is. liii. 10. xxxiv. 23.

What valid reason can be offered for putting a spiritual interpretation on the one class of predictions, in the above series, which was not extended to the other? Notwithstanding of the unbelief of the Jews, those concerning his sufferings and death were fulfilled to the very letter; and what is there in the language of the other which should induce us to adopt a system of interpretation so opposite in its nature? This mode of spiritualizing certain prophecies appears the more exceptionable when we perceive, that while one clause of a sentence is allowed to have a literal signification, another is understood spiritually, although there be nothing observable which can direct to such a change—the system being still farther encumbered by the difficulty of managing certain portions which will in no way bend to such accommodation as it requires. Have we then no reason to fear that in thus introducing a new and unauthorized system of prophetic interpretation, we may be "teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men"? Instead, therefore, of unreasonably persisting in adherence to such opinions, and putting upon Prophecy a meaning it cannot bear, let us inquire whether the more natural and the more obvious sense be not that which the Spirit of God designed. The answer to this inquiry may perhaps be read in the fact, that Prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled in its proper sense; while the consequences of abandoning this mode of interpretation by the Jews, form a beacon which ought ever to be kept in view. By overlooking the plain declarations of his sufferings and death, they would not receive the despised Nazarene as their anointed Lord. Let us not, in defiance of their punishment,

reject the more numerous declarations of his coming and kingdom in glory. Let Christians attend to the lofty descriptions of the holy prophets—let them weigh their united evidence—let them examine the multitude of these predictions, and the sublimity which pervades them—let them consider the harmony with which they all bear testimony to His Coming and abiding with his people—and let them then reflect whether it is probable that all these promises, clear as they seem, and literally as prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled, do not in reality imply, and afford evidence of the truth of Christ's personal reign on earth during the Millennium.

SECTION XVII.

VIEWS OF BELIEVERS IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE, CONCERNING THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

To those who oppose the above views of the Messiah's reign, it ought certainly to appear a singular omission that there should not be found in all the Epistles of the inspired apostles, nor in the writings of the Evangelists, the slightest reference to a period of such unparalleled purity and peace as the Old Testament Prophecies every where represent as still to be enjoyed upon the earth. Yet, so interwoven are the intimations of the Coming of the Lord and the Resurrection of the saints with all reference to the Millennium, that if these events are placed *after* that happy time, then undeniably the New Testament contains not the most distant allusion unto it. If Paul refers to the Millennium as the period when the sons of Abraham shall be again grafted into their own olive, "and so all Israel shall be saved," it is when "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion." Rom. xi. 26. If Peter alludes to the Millennium as "the *Times of Refreshing* from the presence of the Lord," and as the "*Times of the Restitution* of all things," he asserts that then the Lord "shall send Jesus Christ." Acts iii. 17, 20. If the same apostle refers to the Millennium when the "promise" of God uttered by Isaiah should be fulfilled, of "new heavens and a new earth," when Jerusalem shall be created a joy, and her people a rejoicing; still with these new heavens, and

this new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness," our views are again directed to "the coming of the *day of God*," which "*day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night." 2 Pet. iii. 10—13. If our Lord himself points to the restoration of Israel at the Millennium, when he calls upon the Jews then to "look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh," it is when the signs preceding His "Coming in a cloud," *begin to come to pass*. Luke xxi. 27, 28. Or if he alludes to the Millennial "Kingdom" which the God of heaven shall set up at the destruction of Antichrist, when "*the kingdom*, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High ;" still this "*kingdom of God is nigh at hand*" only, when the indications of His Return are observable. Dan. vii. 27. Luke xxi. 27—31. Or if Paul speaks of the destruction of the Man of sin, which shall immediately precede the Millennium, he asserts that him shall the Lord "destroy with the brightness of *His coming*." 2 Thess. ii. 8. Again, does the same apostle allude to the change upon the Inferior creation at the Millennial period, as the removal of a burden they have been made to endure?—still "*the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.... waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body*."*

If, therefore, such predictions really contain allusions to the Millennium, so also are they intimately connected with the Saviour's Return and resurrection of His saints. But if *these* do *not* contain allusions to the Millennium, then are there no references to it in either the Gospels or Epistles. And can it be believed that these should be wholly destitute of allusion to a glory which all the older prophets have announced, and of which prophetic bards have sung in strains of highest rapture—the contemplation of which sustained them while pourtraying the dismal scenes which had to intervene—to picture forth which, images the most splendid have been employed—whose distant prospect cheered the heart of many an aged pilgrim, and its certain bequest to a much-loved offspring soothed his dying hour? It is altogether incredible, that themes which formerly had wakened

* These passages are here brought together merely for the purpose of showing their connections. All of them will afterwards be more particularly examined, and their evidence be more fully elicited, when individually made the subject of future consideration

every holy harp, and prospects which were held out to the faith of believers from earliest time, as the consolation of a suffering church, should have been either unprized or unnecessary at a period so much nearer its commencement. There is no room to question, no reason to doubt, that they both saw and rejoiced in the coming glory. With the Return of that Master for whom they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and in testimony to whose Messiahship they cheerfully laid down their lives, they beheld the realization of the Church's hopes, and the establishment of the predicted "kingdom." They knew that the heavens had received their Lord only "*until the Times of the Restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began;*" for unto them was "*made known the mystery of God's will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of the times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth.*" Acts iii. 21. Ephes. i. 9, 10. To his Return, then, was their faith continually directed, and for this they vehemently longed. The bright visions of futurity had neither been withdrawn nor had they lost their interest, but were all to be realized in the glorious day of their returning Lord.

This view may be shown to be in perfect accordance with the declarations of the Saviour and of his apostles. It has been already seen that the prophets hold out the prospect of One who shall redeem Israel from all the evils to which they have been exposed--from bondage as well as from sin. They expatiate with delight, and in the loftiest language on the dignity of his person, the power he shall possess, the homage he shall receive, and the extent and happiness of his kingdom. And whatever interpretation we may now choose to put upon such predictions, it is known to all, that *at the period of our Lord's incarnation, the Jews were in expectation of a glorious Deliverer, who should then restore them to independence, and reign over them in Zion.* With the great majority, this mistake had a twofold origin. They were unwilling to receive a suffering Messiah—and they applied to *their* times predictions which had no reference unto them. They were ignorant of their need of a Mediator, and they desired an immediate fulfilment of prophecies which related, as we have seen, to a

period after they should have been *dispersed* “into all nations.” This last mistake, however, was not peculiar to those by whom he was rejected, but was entertained by His disciples, and even by His apostles, till the very last hour of his abode among them. Their receiving Him in his humility, as the promised Messiah, did not lead them to a renunciation of their hopes that he would yet take to him his great power and reign. The angel who had been sent to the blessed virgin with the glad tidings of his birth, assured her that “the Lord God shall give unto him THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Luke i. 32. Notwithstanding, therefore, of his present humility, they still looked for the establishment of his kingdom; and when, on one occasion, He was nigh to Jerusalem, and “they thought that the kingdom of God should *immediately appear*,” the Saviour spake a parable to correct their mistake.” Luke xix. 11. This parable of “a certain Nobleman who went into a far country *to receive a kingdom and to return*,” while it proves their error with respect to *the time* of Christ’s establishing his kingdom of glory, left them every reason to conclude that they were perfectly right in the substance of their expectations—the fulfilment of all the promises made in their favour by the prophets, when unto them “shall it come, even the *first dominion*: the Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem;” and when “the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” The establishment of that kingdom which they thought “should *immediately appear*,” the Saviour gave them reason to expect when he shall “return,” *having obtained* the kingdom he has gone to receive. It deserves to be noticed, also, that the case of a nobleman, going into a far country, intrusting his servants with money, that they may testify their love by a right occupation of his property in the interval, and returning after he has received a kingdom, suggests an idea of subsequent continued residence, which ill comports with the views generally entertained of Christ’s coming merely for the purpose of pronouncing sentence upon all. The parable distinctly intimates, that, after a certain time, the Saviour will return to the possession of that Millennial kingdom which the circumstances show believers at that time expected.

Nor did the crucifixion of our blessed Lord destroy the hopes of his disciples, founded, as they were, on that “*sure word of Prophecy*” to which the Church now gives so little heed. While he lay in the sealed tomb, indeed, these hopes might seem almost annihilated; and, uncertain whether he were not still within Death’s dark domain, the two who journeyed toward Emmaus, in the sorrow of their hearts could only say, “we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” (Luke xxiv. 21.) But no sooner were their agitated bosoms calmed by the assurance of their Lord’s resurrection, than the divine promises concerning the erection of his Kingdom recurred in all their wonted strength. The tidings that He lived again, at once testified the acceptance of His sacrifice and proved beyond a doubt, that, in Him, Heaven’s most glorious prophecies might yet be accomplished. Their faith in the truth of God’s word now remained unshaken; and again they confidently trusted that the Messiah should fulfil all that the prophets had foretold concerning Him. They questioned not the certainty of the divine predictions, although they were ignorant of the period of their accomplishment. Accordingly we find that immediately before Christ’s ascension to heaven, and after he had been with them forty days—“speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”—their last question to him was, “Lord, wilt thou *at this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Acts i. 3, 6. Nor did the Saviour reprove them for cherishing expectations of a nature inconsistent with his design, as he did on occasions when this was really the case,—and as might certainly have been expected had their views been as erroneous as many suppose. On the contrary, he gave them every reason to believe, (had the slightest doubt rested on their minds,) that their hopes were indeed well-founded, but that it was not for them “to know *the times and the seasons*, which the Father hath put in his own power.” The passage clearly proves, that at the period of the Saviour’s ascension, the apostles did expect that he should personally restore the kingdom to Israel,—and it also proves, (which is to us of more consequence,) that our Lord fully sanctioned these expectations, although on this occasion, he gave them no information of *the time* of their accomplishment.

SECTION XVIII.

NEW TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS OF CHRIST'S RETURN
AT THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

ALTHOUGH in Scripture no express date is given at which the Saviour shall return, and although of that day or hour knoweth no man, yet both He and his apostles have furnished us with certain intimations of a general nature, and of its connection with certain events which prove it to be at the commencement of the Millennium. This is evident from His own declarations, as recorded, Mat. xxiii. xxiv. xxv. and corresponding passages of other gospels, which, being the most direct intimations the Saviour himself has left of the time of his coming, merit our especial notice. Any consistent explanation of these chapters seems altogether incompatible with those systems which place the personal return of Christ *subsequent* to the Millennium. Much ingenuity has been exercised, and the most incongruous theories of explication have been formed, to bring them into subjection to the current theology on the subject of the glorious advent. With a most culpable negligence of, or recklessness to, the Saviour's statements, these predictions have been tortured into many a meaning, and moulded into many a shape, by those professing reverence for his character and obedience to his laws. One has not scrupled to assert, that our blessed Lord used a pious fraud in deceiving his disciples; while others have sinfully imposed upon his language meanings it can never bear. Some have represented the glorious Coming of which he here speaks, as having taken place in the destruction of Jerusalem: others have, with no less inconsistency, supposed His coming to have been in the after extension of the Roman arms; and although it is to be "*with the clouds of heaven*," it has even been interpreted to mean "*the successful preaching of the gospel*." Some again have represented the whole as referring to the consummation of all things; while others jumble together what is said of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with a supposed reference to the consummation of all things, as spoken of indiscriminately! All this inconsistency and confusion appears to arise from a

determination to bring the predictions into accordance with preconceived ideas of the time of the Saviour's second coming.* Attention to them will at once demonstrate the fallacy of all these opinions, and prove that our Lord's return is at the period of the restoration of his ancient people, before the Millennium, as recorded of the Messiah, by the Prophets.

For the last time, Jesus was now in the Temple, and exposed with unsparing severity the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. He reproves them for their hardness of heart, in persecuting the prophets and rejecting Himself, and denounces upon them coming judgments. He then utters the tender expostulation and lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! [Observe what follows.] Behold your House is left unto you *desolate*, FOR I say unto you, ye shall not *see me* henceforth, *till ye shall say*, Blessed is He that *cometh* in the name of the Lord."

Mat. xxiii. 37—39. He shall not be seen of them "hence-

* When Dr. Hamilton occupied so large a portion of his book with the real and supposed discrepancies of Millenarian writers, respecting unrevealed or little known details, he could not be ignorant, that, with half the zeal and industry he has displayed in this, he might easily have formed a volume of such comments upon the palpable inconsistencies of approved Antimillenarian authors, with respect to the Scripture declarations concerning the Coming itself. But if, instead of referring directly to the divine standard as the test of our opinions, such a mode of reasoning were adopted in other cases, every truth revealed might be easily overthrown, by simply arraying against it the conflicting opinions of men. Conclusions unfavourable to the doctrine of our Lord's Millennial reign, drawn from such premises, are not more admissible than would be the attempt to disprove the reality of His resurrection or ascension, by adducing the fact that his disciples afterwards disputed about the necessity of circumcising Gentile converts. But it may be proper still to remind the Rev. Doctor, that if the inconsistencies of its friends can be received as evidence against the truth of any doctrine, they must bear with much greater force against that system which has long been openly espoused, and concerning which full opportunity has been thus afforded to its advocates, of maturing, comparing, and correcting their opinions; than against that which has only recently been rescued from the oblivion to which for ages it had been consigned, and with the details of which Christians are yet but imperfectly acquainted.

forth" till a certain time. As they then saw Him *personally*, so their not seeing Him "henceforth," for a specific period, must be in the same sense, and therefore implies His personal absence in the interim. But the duration of this his absence is coeval with that of the Temple's desolation : "Behold your House is left unto you desolate, FOR, [the reason or ground of its being so, "for"] I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth." Still, however, this desolation of their House occasioned by the Saviour's absence is only for a limited time, "TILL" *they shall call Him Blessed*. This clearly refers not directly to the individuals immediately addressed. These were the Scribes and Pharisees, on whom He had just denounced a "woe" of condemnation, as men who could not "escape the damnation of hell." ver. 33. *Never*, therefore, will such call Him "blessed." They would not do so at the overthrow of their city ; they will not do so when raised to punishment. But they were the rulers, and therefore the representatives of the Jewish *nation*, who, at their conversion, will, indeed, *bless* that Saviour they have so long execrated : "ye shall not see me, henceforth, till ye shall say, *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" This exclamation, taken from the 118th Psalm, had shortly before been shouted by the multitude as He entered Jerusalem ; (Mat. xxi. 9.) and was, on this occasion, repeated by the children in the Temple. (xxi. 15.) Jesus now declares that He shall thus be welcomed by them *at His Return*—for they shall say, "*Blessed is He that cometh.*" Their conversion will not, therefore, take place till the time of His *Coming*,—till willing cordially to hail Him as their long-expected Messiah. He would not "henceforth" *be seen* by them till then ; but at the commencement of the Millennium, when this moral change is effected on their hearts, and when the desolation of the Temple, (which was to be coeval with His absence,) shall cease—being rebuilt, as we have already shown, after their restoration—then He shall *Return*,—personally return, and shall be again *seen* by His ancient people, who, acknowledging Him as the "sent" of the Lord, will now joyfully exclaim, "*Blessed is He that COMETH in the name of the Lord.*"

Having delivered this important prediction to the Jews, of His absence for a time and the desolation of their

Temple, the Saviour now departed from its precincts, and followed by his disciples, (ruminating on the import of the denunciation just uttered,) He retired to the mount of Olives, the place of his frequent resort, and which commanded a fine view of the Temple, being directly opposite the hill on which it stood : “And Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the Temple.” (xxiv. 1.) It was indeed a magnificent structure; and, as they contemplated its threatened desolation, they were ready to exclaim, in the pathetic language perhaps, as also in the spirit, of prophetic lamentation, “Our holy and beautiful House, where our fathers praised thee!” They therefore point to its superlative grandeur, as if imploring its preservation from the impending destruction. This, however, only calls forth a repetition of the afflicting prediction: “And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” ver. 2. This solemn asseveration of their Master at once negatived their hopes, and prevented farther opportunity for the preservation of the Temple. Assured with certainty of its fate, and remembering the prediction He had so recently delivered within its walls, they now inquire particularly concerning both the commencement and termination of the predicted desolation: “And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, *when shall these things be?* And **WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING, and of the end of the world?**” By recalling to our remembrance what Jesus had foretold before leaving the Temple —a prediction which would make no transient impression on the minds of His Jewish disciples—we shall be better prepared to understand the important questions now addressed to Him, and the grounds which suggested their combination. Unconnected as these questions must at first sight appear, they are, we humbly apprehend, both naturally and intimately connected. The Saviour had just assured them of the destruction of the Temple: and as we have already shown, had shortly before predicted its continued desolation *till* the time of *His coming*. The disciples, therefore, here first ask, “*when*” its destruction will take place: “*when shall these things be?*”—when shall

the temple be utterly “thrown down?” and they next inquire concerning *the termination* of this desolation, inquiring for the sign of the Saviour’s “coming,” which from his prediction in the Temple, they had been taught to connect with the close of that desolation: “Behold your House is *left unto you desolate*, FOR, I say unto you, ye shall not *see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh.*” But, in their second question, they also connect the time of his “coming” with “the end of the world”—or *age*.^{*} Nothing had previously been said by the Saviour, at least nothing is here recorded as previously said, of the “end of the age.” But the disciples were not ignorant of Prophecy, and they were able to observe and attend to its intimations. And thus it was, we have no doubt, they learned to connect *the coming* of the Lord with *the end of the age*. From a prophecy given by Daniel, they had already ascertained the precise era of Christ’s appearance in the world; and, by their acquaintance with this same prediction, and the remembrance of what had so recently

* “The greatest respect is unquestionably due to the Authorized English Translation; but the Original must ever remain the standard of doctrine and interpretation to persons in any degree qualified by education to search after the mind of the Spirit through the medium of that language in which it is primarily expressed. The indiscriminate usage of the term *world*, as a common rendering of *κόσμος*, *αἰώνιον*, and *αἰών*, each of which appears to have a distinct signification, must necessarily occasion some ambiguity in those passages wherein any two of them are used in connection; and if this ambiguity should, in any degree, be removed by the simple substitution of more appropriate and analogous expressions, some light may be thrown upon subjects of the greatest concern and moment. Take, for instance, a passage in the same Evangelist, where *κόσμος* and *αἰών* are used in the same connection, and both translated ‘world.’ (Matt. xiii. 38.) ‘The field is *the world*.’ The ‘harvest is *the end of the world*.’ ‘So shall it be in the end of *this world*.’ On perusing the passage in which these words appear, any plain mind must draw the inference, that at the *destruction of this material globe*, the procedure, represented under the figure of a harvest, would take place; but when it appears in the original that different words are used; that the “world” which is *the field* is *κόσμος*, *mundus*, universe; and the “world” which is then *to end* is *αἰών*, *sæculum*, age; and that ‘*this world*’ refers to the word signifying *age*, and not to that which signifies *universe*; the natural and obvious inference would rather be, ‘*when this age of the world shall end, then shall the harvest come.*’”—*Thoughts on the Scriptural Expectations of the Christian Church.* By Basilicus.—p. 31.

fallen from their Master's lips, they would be enabled to connect the time of Christ's Return with the end of the age. Daniel had foretold that, after the Messiah was "cut off," the City and the Sanctuary should be destroyed, by the people of the Prince who should come against Judea; and that these he should "*make desolate, even until THE CONSUMMATION*" or *end.* Dan. ix. 27. Now, as the Saviour had himself predicted the duration of that very desolation as coeval with the continuance of His absence, his disciples, equally desirous of information concerning both, ask, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?"

From the 4th to the 14th verse, the Saviour gives them a general outline of what should take place up to "*the end*" of the age, cautioning them against false Christs who should arise, and warning them against the supposition, that when they should hear of wars and rumours of wars, that this "*end*" had arrived:—"but the end is *not yet.*" He shows them that this was but the commencement of long continuing affliction to which the Jews should afterwards be exposed,—"*all these are the beginning of sorrows.*" ver. 8. In the 9th and 10th verses, he predicts the persecutions under Pagan Rome; and, probably, in the two following verses, alludes to the Papal Antichrist, in the continued succession of Popes, as the "*many false prophets*" who should rise and "*deceive many;*" and by the establishment of whose abominations "*iniquity shall abound,*" and "*the love of many shall wax cold.*" In the 13th verse he exhorts to steadfastness in maintaining the truth, and in the 14th adds, "*And this gospel of The Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, [not that it shall have been universally received by them for 1000 years,] and THEN shall the END come*"—the "*end of the age*" about which they were inquiring.

Such appears to be the natural and proper exposition of this part of the chapter; although some have laboured hard to make this *end* of the world, or age, appear to be the destruction of the Jewish polity. But, besides that Christianity had made considerable progress before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, there is no authority whatever, for supposing that event the termination of "*the*

age,"—that "*consummation*" or *end* being placed by Daniel *not* at the *commencement*, but at the *close* of the *desolation* of the city and sanctuary, and therefore as preceding the Millennium: "he shall *make desolate* even UNTIL *the consummation*." Dan. ix. 27. It is also to be remembered, that in the latter question of the disciples, this *end* of the *age* was connected with the coming of Christ: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"*

Having thus given them a very condensed view of events up to the end of the *age*, the Saviour, in the 15th verse, returns, and becoming more minute in the specification of particulars, points to the duration of the afflictions upon the Jews, and gives farther instructions to be recorded for the guidance and direction of those living in the periods to which His predictions referred, and who were more particularly interested: "When ye, THEREFORE, [this being *an inference* relative to their conduct drawn from the former chronological part of His discourse—"when ye therefore"] shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand,) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains—let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days."

The parenthetical injunction for the reader to *understand* clearly implies a danger of mistake; and the neglect of this very warning has probably occasioned much of the confusion in which commentators have involved the chapter. As the prediction of the prophet, from which we have already quoted, not only shows to what our Lord immediately refers, but will also assist us in another part of the inquiry, we shall now cite fully the passage to which our attention is thus particularly called: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to

* Dr. Hamilton, (p. 156,) affects to discredit the distinction between *καιρός* and *αιών*, but the Examinator in the Christian Instructor, whose papers the Doctor highly eulogizes, admits that "the end of the world," in the question of the disciples, is literally the "completion of the age."—*Christian Instructor*, p. 553.

restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven [prophetic] weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks [of years] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and *the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary*; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and *for the overspreading of abominations he shall make desolate*, even *until the consummation*, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,"—or "desolator," (*marg.*) Dan. ix. 25—27.

Our only remark on this, at present, is, that the prophet evidently refers to the Romans as "the people of the prince that shall come," and to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by that of "the City and the Sanctuary," together with the continuance of their desolation "for the overspreading of abominations." But although the Saviour clearly refers to this destruction of the city, and warns his followers to escape when they should see the period arrive, it is difficult to conceive how any should have thought of applying to that event what He afterwards states respecting his *Coming*, in answer to the second question of his disciples. Such a misapplication is the more surprising, as He has carefully guarded against false ideas of the nature of his coming. Having predicted a period of the greatest tribulation that ever was or shall be, He warns them, in the 24th verse, against false Christs and false prophets who shall arise, and adds, "*Wherefore*, if they shall say unto you, Behold He is in the Desert, go not forth: Behold He is in the secret chambers, believe it not; *Fcr*, [this is the reason why they are not to go into the desert seeking Him, "for"] as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." When He *comes*, therefore, it will be in no secret influence on the soul; no mere display of power in the infliction of judgments; no coming to be known only in a chamber or witnessed only in a desert—but a bright and glorious manifestation of himself, instantaneous and *SEEN of all*,—as the lightning which "cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west." "Behold he cometh with

clouds," said the beloved disciple long after the destruction of Jerusalem, yet repeating nearly the very words of the Saviour's prediction in the following verse, which is so often misapplied to the destruction of Jerusalem; "Behold He cometh with clouds, and *every eye* shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. i. 7.

Having warned them against mistake or deception with respect to the *nature* of his coming, the Saviour proceeds more particularly to inform his disciples *when* this glorious event shall take place: "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days*, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and *then* shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and *then* shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN*, [or, as in the parallel gospel by Luke, (xxi. 27.) "in a cloud,"] with power and great glory, *and he shall send his angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and *they shall gather together his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." In order, therefore, to know the period of our Saviour's return, it is only necessary to ascertain *when* "the tribulation" here spoken of *shall cease*. For this we are furnished with three keys. The first may be found in the passage already quoted from the prophecies of Daniel. We there learn, that "*unto the end of the war* desolations are determined," and that, "*for the overspreading of abominations*," the city and Sanctuary shall *continue* to be made desolate, "*even until the consummation*, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate"—or, (as corrected in the *margin*,) "*upon the desolator*." It is to this continuance of the desolation, we apprehend, our attention is especially directed by the parenthetical warning of the Saviour or Evangelist, "*whoso readeth let him understand*;"—the full knowledge of its *duration* being necessary in order to the understanding of the prediction of his Return, "*immediately after the tribulation of those days*," at its termination. The "*consummation*" has not yet arrived. God's controversy, or "*war*" with his ancient people has not yet ceased; nor has "*that determined*" been wholly poured upon its objects, whether reading "*desolate*," it is referred to the Jews; or reading "*desolator*," it is referred to those by whom they have been

oppressed. But, as we have already seen, "the end," or "consummation," will come when the gospel has been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations;" and when the city and sanctuary cease to be made "desolate." God's controversy with his ancient people must cease before the Millennium, for then he shall have returned to them "with mercies;" and, as we shall afterwards see, this is to be preceded by the infliction of dreadful judgments upon their enemies. The Saviour's return being "*immediately after the tribulation of those days*" must therefore be before the Millennium.*

* Mr. Faber treats as a "vulgar error" the notion that Christ's coming in the clouds of heaven was at the destruction of Jerusalem; (*Sacred Calender*, vol. i. p. 207,) and correctly enough places it future at the "close of the Times of the Gentiles, and at the end of the long dispersion of Judah among all nations." But, contrary to all the principles of *homogeneity*, so often and so ably advocated by himself, he maintains—and that on no higher authority than his own affirmation—that it will be a figurative advent." And having thus denied that our Lord here predicts His personal Return, he subsequently states that "the sole *apparent* evidence, which after long thought on the subject" he has been able to discover in favour of the views of Millenarians, is one single text. From this exception we are, however, allowed very little advantage. He might indeed as well have included it *at once* with the others, as it is only doomed to share a similar fate in a more advanced part of his argument. But is there a single circumstance in the above prediction of our Lord, or in the circumstances which gave rise to it, which would lead to the supposition of its being any thing else than a personal coming of which the Saviour speaks? The inconsistency of putting upon it a figurative interpretation is accurately stated in an observation, (perfectly applicable in the present case,) by the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, in his last published volume of Sermons—to which alone, it may be observed, we subsequently refer, although for brevity's sake we shall in future merely cite the page from which we quote: "Did the words occur," says the Doctor, (p. 498) speaking of a passage to which we shall yet have occasion to refer; "did the words occur in an historical or epistolary composition, it would *justly* be pronounced *unnatural* (unless we were specially warned of the writer's purposed *deviation* from his ordinary style,) to explain them symbolically." And what else do those who, without any such "warning," and in opposition to the "ordinary style" of both the Saviour and his evangelist, and at variance with the nature of the questions to which the prediction is professedly the answer, would put upon such language a figurative interpretation? But we cannot here conceal our surprise that Dr. Wardlaw, in discussing the subject of Christ's premillennial coming, and professing to examine (p. 491) such passages as "may seem most directly relevant and important," should not have at all adverted to *this* most direct and important prediction.

In the 21st verse, we have the second source of evidence, in the extent of the tribulation by which the coming of Christ shall be preceded: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be; and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Now as there cannot be two tribulations, each the greatest that ever was, this period cannot yet have arrived, for we learn from Daniel (xii. 1.) that this greatest tribulation is to be at the period of the restoration of Israel: "And at that time,"—at the destruction of the Ottoman empire, predicted in the last verse of the preceding chapter,—"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, *and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time;* and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book." Here then we find that the time of the greatest trouble, *up to that period*, is to be at the time of the restoration of Israel, the children of Daniel's people, when Michael the prince stands up in their behalf. This is again declared, (Jer. xxx. 7, 8:) "Alas! for that day is great, *so that NONE IS LIKE IT; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.* For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and *strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.*" And as our Lord himself says immediately after the tribulation of those days shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, so the prophet here adds, "*They shall serve the Lord their God, and THE BELOVED their King, whom I will raise up unto them.*"—"Then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, *nor ever shall be.* And except those days should be shortened, *there should no flesh be saved.* But [blessed be God for His promise,] for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." This prediction by our Lord, of a period when there should *no flesh* be saved but for the elect's sake, corresponds fully with another in Isaiah, which also refers to the period immediately preceding the time "when the Lord of hosts

shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Between the part of the prediction of our Lord concerning His return, under consideration, and that of the prophet, there is an exact parallel, while the prophet also foretells the awful tribulation by which it is preceded: "Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and *few men left.*" Is. xxiv. 1—6, 23. It seems therefore a misapplication of our Lord's prediction of this *greatest* tribulation to refer it to the destruction of Jerusalem, although it may have some appearance of being connected with the prophecy relative to that event. We apprehend, however, that our Lord, having foretold the near destruction of Jerusalem and the troubles connected with it, carries forward the views of believers to the day of the Lord,—the long-desired Sabbath,—and to the more dreadful tribulation at its commencement, which he contrasts with that at the destruction of Jerusalem. This, we think, is that "Sabbath" and that "winter" or "tempest," as the word signifies, (see Acts xxvii. 10.) concerning which the Saviour enjoins believing Jews to pray their flight be not in it. In this as in other cases the prophecy, having reference to the time of the Saviour's return, is addressed to the disciples for the instruction of their brethren in all ages. The *flight* to which he refers appears to be that already noticed, "when all nations" shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle after the restoration of Israel, when, says the prophet Zechariah, "ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; and [as in our Lord's own prophecy,] the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Zech. xiv. 1—5. This being in a time of tribulation so much greater than was even that at the destruction of Jerusalem, the Saviour probably directs His disciples of the Jewish nation—to whom the prophecy was given, and to whose circumstances much of it relates—to pray that they be not involved in it.

There are various reasons which constrain us to think that it is at the 19th verse our Lord concludes his directions concerning the conduct of the disciples at the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the 20th directs attention forward to the greater tribulation immediately preceding His com-

ing. It is at the time of this "winter," or *tempest*, that "*then* shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." Matt. xxiv. 20, 21. This time of *greatest* tribulation, as has been shown, is however to be at the restoration of Israel, (Dan. xii. 1,) and therefore could not be referred to by our Lord as at the destruction of Jerusalem formerly. It is evidently the same that is predicted, Rev. xvi. 18. It is spoken of by our Lord, as just noticed, to be a time of such great tribulation, that but for the elect's sake, "*no flesh* should be saved." This, while it accords fully with the predictions concerning the time of trouble at the commencement of the Millennium, does not appear at all to apply to the destruction of Jerusalem in which *the Jews only* were involved. Again the period of trouble referred to by our Lord is to be *shortened* "for the elect's sake." Neither does this, however, correspond with the circumstances connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, from which the Christians had escaped *before* its calamities commenced, and whose escape therefore (into which it is explained) did not depend on the *shortening* of that trouble. The "tribulation" of which our Lord speaks, as being "*immediately*" preceding His coming, must be still future, and is only referable to the unparalleled troubles at the close of the present Gentile dispensation.

The return of Christ at the restoration of Israel is rendered farther evident on attending to the parallel passage of the evangelist Luke, who, instead of referring us to Daniel, simply embodies in few words the information we have already obtained from that prophet: "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people; and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" And then *follow* the signs of Christ's return, and the account of the coming itself as given by Matthew: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. *And THEN shall they see the Son of Man*

coming in a cloud, with power and great glory." Luke xxi. 23—27. Jerusalem still is "trodden down of the Gentiles," and therefore the coming of the Son of Man is an event yet future. But we have the full assurance of the Saviour's verity, that "immediately after the tribulation of those days," and after certain celestial signs, that then shall be seen the Son of Man coming in great glory. And that as it was the predictions of His *personal* absence during the period of the temple's desolation which induced the disciples to ask concerning his "*Coming*"; and as it was *no* "*figurative advent*" about which they thus inquired, that so also must it be of His *personal* Return, of which he gave them the signs in reply.*

These remarks are designed not merely to direct attention to the precise period of our Lord's return, but also to counteract an erroneous opinion too generally entertained, that Christ Himself, in some sense, applies to the destruction of Jerusalem, what he declares of his Personal Coming in the clouds of heaven, when he shall be *seen so coming* of all the kindreds of the earth. Such an opinion can only be accounted for on the supposition of the total oversight of those various statements by which it is completely refuted. But indeed the language itself in which the Coming is announced, expressly excludes the possibility of any such construction. Even if the miseries attending the de-

* It is much to be regretted that Dr. Hamilton should at all have lent himself to the maintenance of what we must regard as a doctrinal error, but still more so, that he has been so little scrupulous about the means by which this may be effected. There is often in his work a misquotation of Scripture, as well as of the sentiments of his opponents, which, to put upon it the most favourable construction, betrays a very culpable negligence. Referring to this passage, (p. 250,) he says, the coming of our Lord "was to be *accompanied* by the captivity of the Jews among all nations; and *followed* by the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," and actually proceeds to reason on this singular perversion of the passage. What renders this the more unaccountable is, that he has adduced this very passage to shew that the primitive church might have known that the coming of Christ could not be so near at hand as they imagined, since He had "*affirmed*, that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled." (p. 12.) Yet in the same 250th page, the Doctor asserts that the advent of which the Redeemer here speaks, "was to be *succeeded* immediately by the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars from heaven"!!

struction of Jerusalem, rather than any subsequent to that event had been “the tribulation” here spoken of, it is still to be observed that the Coming of the Lord was not to be “*in*” that tribulation—not even *contemporaneously*, but—“immediately *AFTER*” it, whatever the *tribulation* itself may be. But, as has been proved, this refers to future times; to which our attention must still be directed as the period IMMEDIATELY *after* which, or at the Restoration of Israel, when Jerusalem shall have ceased to be trodden down of the Gentiles, that then the coming of our Lord shall be gloriously realized, as here declared by Himself and uniformly predicted by the prophets.

Again, on the supposition that Christ was not to return till *after* the Millennium, it might well appear surprising that He should not have *included* that long term of holiness and happiness among the signs which precede his coming. After the world had for thousands of years been torn by dissension, and been the scene of every wickedness, such a lengthened period of universal purity and peace must have proved a very notable sign. But, as has been observed, the words “*immediately after* the tribulation of those days,” prove that the coming of the Saviour shall precede the commencement of the Millennium, and therefore its existence could not have been given as a sign of his approach.

Still, it has always been objected—and it has most unaccountably proved a serious difficulty, even to some of those who have ably defended this doctrine—that our Lord said, “this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled;” and, understanding this to refer to the men then living, confusion or falsehood has thus been indirectly charged upon the blessed Saviour. But it is obvious that if there had been the slightest force in the objection as bearing against the doctrine of our Lord’s return *before* the Millennium, it must bear with at least equal force against all who suppose his coming to be *after it*. For if *all* these things were to be fulfilled before those then alive had died, then it can in no way refer to the consummation of all things, as this would be to assert that *all* was not fulfilled for at least about 3000 years after their death. No one who believes in the Saviour’s truthfulness need be reminded, that he never could say that *he* should be *seen* coming in the clouds of heaven, and that the elect should be gathered

from one end of heaven to the other by his angels, before the people then upon the earth should have ceased to live. Such a supposition, while it overlooks the fact that he had just fixed that event as subsequent to the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles, also charges the Saviour with direct falsehood, a blasphemy which ought instantly to have suggested the necessity of some other explanation.* Indeed it appears remarkable that the expression should ever have occasioned any difficulty either to those who maintain, or to those who oppose the Millennial Reign of Christ. Γενεα, the word translated "generation," has for one of its significations "a race," implying succession from father to son; and of *thirty-nine* instances we have examined in which it occurs in the new Testament, *twenty-two* are, in Beza's Latin translation, rendered *gens* and *natio*, words

* Although our Lord says that his coming will take place immediately after that greatest tribulation which we have shown to be *still future*, and of which the present commotions among the nations are evidently the commencement, Dr. Hamilton observes, (p. 250,) that "to look at the words of our Lord, and then say that 'immediately after,' means more than eighteen centuries; and that 'this generation shall not pass till *all* these things be fulfilled,' signifies merely till some of them be accomplished; discovers no ordinary degree of critical hardihood. This hardihood," he adds, "has frequently been displayed." Whether the Doctor had in view any recent instance, is not for us to determine; certain it is, however, that in the very page which records the censure, and in others, he himself has so limited both expressions, by making the passage refer, even with his own notions of its meaning, "*primarily* and *principally*," to Christ's "return to destroy the Jewish capital." We need make no farther remark on the unscriptural notion of Christ's *return* for that purpose, an opinion unsupported as we have seen by the only authority on which it is supposed to rest, and, as we shall shortly show, directly opposed to the express declaration of one of the holy apostles. But unless the Doctor can suppose that *all* is accomplished when what "*was primarily and principally intended*" has been fulfilled, he must submit himself to the chastisement his own reproof was designed to inflict. If the Doctor had nothing else to fear than the demolition of his own argument against the expectations of the primitive church, this ought to have prevented his falling into such a mistake. But when our Lord declares, Luke xxi. 24, that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles UNTIL *the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*," and adds, in the 32d verse, "verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled," will even the Doctor have the "critical hardihood" to affirm that our Lord ever could mean that the times of the Gentiles, which he himself will acknowledge are not yet expired, should be fulfilled ere the men then alive went down to the dust.

always signifying a people or nation. The last of these renderings, indeed, our English translators have themselves given it in Phillipians ii. 15, ("in the midst of a crooked and perverse *nation* ;") and by merely adopting the same translation in this passage, all obscurity is entirely removed. Our Saviour's meaning in the expression will then be, that notwithstanding that he had just predicted unparalleled sufferings to which the Jewish nation should be subjected—being carried captive into all nations, having their capital laid waste and subject to the power of ruthless spoilers—that still *as a nation* they should yet continue to exist till his return. And as if it were almost incredible that a nation *could* survive such complicated distress, he adds the assurance, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*

All who oppose the doctrine of Christ's personal reign on the earth during the Millennium, build much on a parabolic illustration of the prediction just considered. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; [—or rather, as it is in the original, "*all THE nations* ;"] and He shall separate the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on His

* While the first edition was passing through the press, a Millenarian work, published 1770, by the Rev. S. Hardy, Lecturer at Enfield, Middlesex, was put into our hands, in which nearly the same view is given of this passage. He does not appear to have observed the translation of Phil. ii. 15, but refers as authority in support of the above rendering to Beza, Chrysostom, Erasmus, Pasor, and Mede. We have since ascertained that the same interpretation of the passage has been offered by many others. Among the most eminent of these in the present day, is the Rev. Mr. Faber. In his "Sacred Calender of Prophecy," precisely the same view of the signification of this word is given, supported by numerous authorities. He says decidedly indeed that "the *primary* meaning of the word is *a race, or family, or nation* ." (vol. i. p. 264.) His testimony is the more valuable from its being contained in a work decidedly Anti-millenarian. If the opinion of the church were generally corrected with respect to the *time* of Christ's coming, his mere assertion of its being a *figurative* advent, (and he really offers no higher authority, however frequently he repeats that assertion,) would convince few that Christ's "coming with the clouds of heaven" attended by his angels, who "shall gather together his elect from the four winds," will be any thing else than His Personal Return.

right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered," &c. Mat. xxv. 31—46. From this it has been inferred, that Christ's coming will not be till the consummation of all things, because He is represented as gathering "all nations" before Him; and consequently, it is supposed, the whole human race. There is, it must be acknowledged, considerable difficulty in ascertaining precisely our Lord's design in this statement; but we believe it was intended to have a much more limited application than it often receives. It is generally assumed that "all nations" here, includes not only the whole of mankind alive at the time, but also the whole of the human family who have ever lived, or ever will. This is, however, an unwarrantable assumption. *Tα εθν*, translated "nations," is never in any way, applied to the dead, so far as we can discover. Even in English, the word *nations* is only applied to men in their earthly relations—such distinctions being lost in the future state. But the term here used in the Original, although it signifies "*the* nations" in a general sense, has also a more limited signification, being very frequently restricted to *the Gentiles* only, as distinguished from the Jews. Thus, in these very predictions it is so used when the Saviour says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the *Gentiles*, until the times of the *Gentiles* be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24. Again, when He sent forth the apostles, he said unto them, "Go not into the way of the *Gentiles*. . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Mat. x. 5, 6. It is used in the same sense in the blessing of the aged Simeon, "A light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke ii. 32. It is often so used by Paul: "Wherefore remember, says he to the Ephesians, "that ye being in time past *Gentiles* in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision." Ephes. ii. 11. Again, speaking of the mystery of the gospel, he says, "it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit, that *the Gentiles** should be fellow-

* Of *Eighty-seven* times in which the "Gentiles" are mentioned in our translation of the New Testament, in above *Eighty* the original Greek has this very word.

heirs." Ephes. iii. 6. In the parable, it might therefore be rendered, "and before Him shall be gathered all *the Gentiles*." In the prophecies also, the expression "all nations" is sometimes used where the whole human family *alive* are evidently *not* included. It is the very expression used by the prophet Zechariah, in reference to the destruction of Antichristian nations at the coming of the Lord before the Millennium; to which prophecy our Lord probably alluded: "Behold the *day of the Lord* cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather *all nations* against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. *Then shall the Lord go forth*, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."

Zech. xiv. 1—3. This is repeated, Joel iii. 1, 2: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather *all nations*, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." "And again, the Lord threatens the utter destruction of "all nations," when, it will be admitted, it cannot be absolutely understood of the whole human family. "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon *all nations*, and his fury upon all their armies; *he hath utterly destroyed them*, he hath delivered them to the slaughter." Is. xxxiv. 1, 2. To this dreadful event, it is probable, our Lord, in the parable, refers, when he shall destroy the nations which have so long been favoured with the blessings of his gospel, without availing themselves of its privileges; and when his own people shall be made participants of the joy and honour of his millennial kingdom. That the description is not that of the general final judgment is evident from the circumstance that all the "nations," here spoken of, must have been favoured with the gospel among them. The ground of acquittal, or condemnation, respects only the love which has been displayed

towards the saints. This rule of judgment is therefore inapplicable to those of heathen nations who have gone down to the dust without having ever heard the Saviour's name or known one poor disciple. Farther, this representation cannot be literally understood as applicable to all individuals, even in the nations called *Christian*, without setting the parable in direct opposition to the plain statements of Scripture. These nations are represented as divided into only two classes. All, therefore, who are not found on the right hand must be included among those on the left. But none are received to the right except such as have testified their love to Christ by deeds of benevolence to his saints, in circumstances of distress; although we have full assurance that all who rely by faith on the merits of the Redeemer's blood shall be saved, even if grace has been bestowed when under such circumstances as may deprive them of all opportunity of displaying their love by the deeds to which it prompts, as in the case of the penitent thief on the cross. To escape the dilemma in which they are thus placed, our opponents may say the will is, in such cases, taken for the deed. But this is to depart from that literal explanation of the parable on which the argument is made to rest—the very point for which we plead. It is, therefore, obvious, that this cannot be understood as an exact representation of the final judgment.*

But it is to be remarked as not a little surprising, that while the direct statements of the period of our Lord's return are so easily set aside, no hesitation should be evinced in founding an important doctrine on the literal interpretation of the language of a parable—a kind of proof which, in no other case, would be received as equivalent to a plain declaration. The unsuitableness of parables spoken with a general design, for establishing a particular and disputed doctrine, is well known and generally acknowledged. Indeed by interpreting literally the language of parables, the most opposite doctrines may be established as sanctioned by the word of God. Thus in the parable before us, all

* Mr. Mason, the Examinator in the Instructor, Dr. Hamilton, and a writer in the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, all cling to this parable with a tenacity which betrays the consciousness of their being destitute of better support. It is not however necessary that we should now review their remarks individually, as they all proceed upon the assumption of its being a detailed account of the final judgment, without the least attempt at proof.

nations are represented as being gathered together—then separated into two great companies, and as having judgment pronounced upon the whole of each division simultaneously. But, by interpreting literally another parable in the same chapter, (ver. 14—30,) we have a very different view of the procedure of judgment. In it, each individual is called forward, singly and successively, to give account of the improvement he has made of the talents intrusted to him; and, individually, they receive rewards proportioned to the zeal they have severally displayed in the occupation of the talents committed to them. Thus, the consequence of interpreting literally the language of these parables, is to set Scripture against itself, by applying it to purposes it was never designed to serve.

There is another and most important circumstance overlooked when this parable is adduced in confutation of the doctrine of Christ's return before the Millennium. The two already referred to, and that which precedes them—of the ten virgins who had fallen asleep while the Bridegroom tarried, and who continued in that state until aroused by the announcement of his near arrival—form part of a series*

* The nature and limits of the present publication do not admit of our entering upon the consideration of these parables in their connection with the prediction for the illustration of which they were delivered; nor of a more enlarged examination of the prediction itself. In treating on so many points, embracing in a connected form such a multitude of prophecies, for the purpose of presenting in one view their combined evidence, brevity of illustration was absolutely requisite. But as no view of the Saviour's Return can be considered as correct which is at variance with His own direct statements on the subject, the full elucidation of these chapters is of the highest importance in the discussion of the doctrine of His Millennial Reign. Much additional evidence may yet be derived from them in support of the views now maintained, which if properly exhibited, will add greatly to the strength of the Millenarian argument. This the author has made the subject of a separate publication, in which he has minutely examined various theories of interpretation, and adduced many additional arguments in favour of the view given above, from the occasion on which these predictions were delivered—from the circumstances in which they were spoken—the time at which they were uttered—the persons to whom they were addressed—the language in which they are conveyed—an enlarged consideration of the various parabolic illustrations in their proper application to the time of Christ's coming—a full comparison of Matthew's narrative with those of the other evangelists—from the past and present fulfilment of the preceding signs in the history of the church and of the world—and other points of evidence.

which our Lord spake in illustration of that declaration of his coming “immediately after the tribulation” upon both Jews and Gentiles at the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles. “**THEN,**” or *at that time*, says the Saviour, “shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,” &c. They can therefore only be referred to the period of his Millennial reign. And accordingly it deserves to be noticed, that in the parable on which the objection is founded, the Redeemer uniformly speaks of himself as “the Son of Man” at his coming; but after having sate down “upon the throne of his glory,” He always designates himself “The King.” If, then, an argument could with propriety be constructed upon its language, the objector might find this parable bearing forcibly against his own opinion; and this it really and most unquestionably does when viewed as having been delivered in illustration of Christ’s plain declaration of his coming, described in the preceding chapter. Nor is the formality of judgment, here represented, inconsistent with the view thus given, when compared with other Scriptures. Thus, for example, we have in Dan. vii. 9, 10. (a passage perfectly parallel,) the destruction of Antichrist before the Millennium, part of which has been already executed, set forth under the representation of a judgment—the thrones being placed, the books opened, &c. “I beheld,” says the prophet, till the thrones were cast down, [set or placed,] and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; *the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*” Living, as we now are, in the scene referred to, without witnessing in form the solemnities here described, the language of the prophecy may serve to illustrate that of the parable.*

* An objection is sometimes founded on another declaration of our Lord, “Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.” Mat. xvi. 28. This is often applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, and it is thence inferred, that he will not come in any other manner, till the consummation of all things. Although Christ had here referred to that event, this could no more have been in opposition to the evidence of his personal return at the commencement of the Millennium, than it would have subverted the theory

Shortly after the ascension of Christ, the apostle Peter held out to the Jewish nation the assurance of His return at the period of their conversion. Addressing them in Solomon's porch, after the miraculous cure of the lame man, he declared that they had killed the Prince of life, and exhorted them to repentance: "Repent ye therefore," says he, "and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when *the Times of Refreshing shall come* from the presence of the Lord, and HE SHALL SEND JESUS CHRIST, which before was preached unto you; *whom the heavens must receive until the Times of Restitution of All Things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since*

of his coming at any subsequent period. But not only is the assumption of His coming at the destruction of Jerusalem altogether gratuitous, and opposed as we shall soon see to Peter's assurance almost so soon as Christ had left the earth, that the heavens must receive Him till the Restitution of all things, but such an application of the passage before us is also at variance with another reference to it by the same apostle, which proves that it was to an event of a very different character the Saviour thus alluded. In the preceding verse he had spoken of his return "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." This glory his disciples had expected he would then assume, and for the confirmation of their faith that *his return* would be in glory, when he would appear very differently from what he had done in his humility, he condescended to appear to three of them as he will be seen by all at his future coming, in glorified humanity, attended by two of his saints, as recorded immediately after by the evangelist. "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain, apart, and *was transfigured before them*; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him." Mat. xvii. 1—3. So, it may be remarked, all the three evangelists who record the Saviour's promise, thus follow it immediately with the account of the transfiguration, without interposing the notice of any other circumstance between their record of the promise and the statement of that celestial appearance, which seemingly they regard as its early fulfilment. (Mat. xvi. 28. xvii. 1. Mark ix. 1, 2. Luke ix. 27, 28.) And the apostle Peter, one of the honoured three who witnessed this transfiguration, elsewhere alluding to this appearance in celestial glory, expressly calls it "*the power and coming*" of Christ: "For we have not," says he, "*followed cunningly-devised fables*, when we made known unto you *the power and coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven, we heard *when we were with him in the holy mount.*" 2 Pet. i. 16—18.

the world began." Acts iii. 19—21. Here, then, we may observe, is a complete confutation of the idea of Christ's return at the destruction of Jerusalem. He had left the earth very shortly before the apostle thus declared that the heavens must receive him until the Times of Restitution. We are assured, however, that when these Times of Refreshing shall come to Israel, He shall again be sent unto them, the heavens receiving him only *until* the Times of Restitution of all things predicted by the prophets. This is the only instance in the New Testament in which the noun here translated "Restitution" occurs, but the verb from which it is derived is used frequently, and always in the sense of restoration; as when Jesus said unto the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was *restored* whole, like as the other." Matt. xii. 13. And when the apostles were "come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time *restore* again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts i. 6. And that these "Times" are no other than those of the Millennium is farther obvious from the fact, that there are *no other* "Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," than those exhibited in the preceding passages, of the times now called the Millennium. Christ, in his divine nature, is everywhere present, and therefore as really here now as he will be then; but in his human nature he left the earth in presence of his disciples, being taken up in a cloud, and shall return "*in like manner,*" as announced by the angel. He has sate down on His Father's throne, and shall continue to sit at his right hand "*until His enemies be made his footstool.*" But when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and the times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, He shall send unto his ancient people—not the Spirit, who is already ~~with~~ us, and who has been to the Church the Comforter in His absence, but—the Redeemer, "*Jesus Christ.*" That the "Times of Refreshing," anticipated by the holy apostle, are not merely times of consolation enjoyed by individuals in a state of grace, but of their *national* conversion, is manifest. He expressly declares, that, when these times of Refreshing have come, the Lord will then send Jesus Christ unto them, while yet he affirms that the heavens must receive Him till the times of Restitution of all things; the Times of Refresh-

ing referred to, must therefore be the Millennium as well as those of Restitution. As a nation, the Jews consummated their wickedness by the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. With this enormity the apostle charged them, not as individuals, but as a people, saying, “*Ye denied the Holy One and the Just,*” and “*Killed the Prince of Life.*” For this dreadful wickedness, *national* punishment has been awfully inflicted, and is still in store. But they are not altogether cast off. When they shall see their iniquity in all its extent, and mourn in bitterness on account of it; when, in the language of the apostle, their sins shall be “blotted out,” —when the blood of Jesus they wantonly shed, and the curse of which with awful infatuation they invoked upon themselves and their children, shall be upon them in a blessed sense, and “the Times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,” He will then send unto them that Jesus whom they formerly despised, and refused to acknowledge as the Anointed One.*

* By connecting them with the period when “all nations shall serve and obey” the Lord, Dr. Hamilton seems to admit (p. 136,) that “the Times of Refreshing” are those of the Millennium, but afterwards introduces (p. 161,) a long quotation from Mr. Faber, in which, by an elaborate but unavailing criticism on the word “Restitution,” he endeavours to evade the force of the passage. If Mr. Faber had attended to the fact, that “when the times of Refreshing shall come,” Jesus is to be sent, it might have prevented his embarking in the hopeless enterprise of explaining away the meaning of the Greek word translated *Restitution*, the derivation of which indeed perfectly secures its signification. And if he admits—which it is scarcely possible he should deny—that “the times of Refreshing” refer to the future Restoration of Israel to the favour of God at the Millennium, there is no escaping from the conclusion that then is the time of Christ’s return. Even if his trivial objection to Mede’s construction were just, which is not admitted, it may at once be obviated by substituting the word “announced” for “spoken,” which the original fully admits. See *Parkhurst*.

The rendering of this passage, in the authorized version, is most ably vindicated in Mr. Cunningham’s “Critical Examination of some of Mr. Faber’s Fundamental Principles of Prophetic Interpretation,” and in Mr. Drummond’s Letter to Dr. Hamilton. Mr. Mason does justice to our Translation, and says, (Gentiles’ Fulness, p. 201.) “the word in the Greek is literally and most properly rendered” Restitution. But, in quoting the passage, he stops short at the “restitution of all things,” and applies this to “the time of the last judgment,” and “the end of all things.” But the mere quotation of the remainder of the sentence is sufficient to exclude this idea, and to prove that the apostle referred to the Millennium—that being the only “Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

The Lord seems to allude to his rejection by backsliding Israel, his return to heaven for a time, and his coming again at the period of their conversion, when he says by the mouth of the prophet Hosea, “They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and *they have not known the Lord*; and the pride of Israel doth testify to his face; *therefore* shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; *he hath withdrawn himself from them....I will go and RETURN to my place* [in heaven, where he now is,] *TILL they acknowledge their offence and seek my face.*” Hos. v. 4, 5, 6, 15. “Repent ye therefore and be converted,” says the apostle, “that your sins may be blotted out when the times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.”

The apostle Paul writing to the saints in Rome, and treating expressly of the conversion of Israel, says, “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this *mystery*, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness, in part, is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Rom. xi. 25—27. As, in the Gospel by Luke, our Lord in predicting his return, declared that Jerusalem should first be “trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*,” so the apostle here intimates that the blindness of Israel will continue till “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,”—when “the Deliverer shall come out of Zion.” He quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah, “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.” Is. lix. 20. Here the promise is, that He will come to Zion, and unto them that *do turn* from transgression; but Paul, quoting from the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, (then in common use,) has made an accommodation of the passage. Both the prophet and the apostle, however, explicitly announce the coming of the Redeemer at the period of Israel’s conversion; and while the one pre-

dicts His coming *to the earthly Zion*, the other assures us of His return *from the heavenly Zion*, under the pledge of God's covenant with them.*

The long-desolate state of Israel, without a prince among them, is predicted by the prophet Ezekiel, while he also points to its termination: "And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end; Thus saith the Lord God, *Remove the diadem and take off the crown*; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, *until HE COME whose right it is; and I will give it Him.*" Ezek. xxi. 25—27. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Is. xxiv. 23.

* Mr. Mason supposes that because the apostle says, (using the language of the Greek translation by the Seventy,) the Deliverer shall come *out of Zion*, it cannot mean a literal advent: (Gentiles' Fulness, p. 187.) But heaven is, by way of figure, sometimes called Zion in Scripture, as in the following passage, referring to the same advent: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, *until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* The Lord shall send the Rod of thy Strength *out of Zion*; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in *the day of thy power*, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning." Ps. cx. 1—3. But the passage would not accord with Mr. Mason's opinion, even if his idea of "*gospel Zion*" were admitted. For while he would thus make the *Spirit* come *to* the church, the apostle says the Deliverer shall come *out of Zion*. And as the prophet was no less inspired than the apostle, the view taken of the language as quoted by Paul, must be in consistency with Isaiah's prediction. Were this the only passage in which Christ's return at the commencement of the Millennium was declared—and if it was either of difficult interpretation, or when so understood appeared in opposition to other scriptures—some liberty might then be allowed in putting upon it such a construction as the necessities of the case might demand. But surely where there is such a harmony of Scriptural Evidence centering in the same point, such an explanation is not more unnecessary than it would be unsatisfactory.

SECTION XIX.

NEW TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS OF CHRIST'S RETURN
AT THE DESTRUCTION OF ANTICHRIST.

BEFORE the Millennium, the Papal Apostasy, we are assured, will be destroyed; and we have the express declaration of Paul that this is to be completely effected by the coming of Christ. In his first epistle to the Church at Thessalonica, the apostle had expressed joy in their having “turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and *to wait for his Son from heaven.*” 1 Thess. i. 9. He had exhorted them to “walk worthy of God,” who had called them “unto *His kingdom and glory.*” (ii. 12.) He had regarded them as his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, *at his coming.*” (ii. 19.) He had prayed that the Lord would establish their hearts “unblameable in holiness, before God, even our Father, *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*” (iii. 13.) He had farther comforted them concerning the death of their believing friends, by the assurance that those who “sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” (iv. 14.) He had reminded them, that, to those who expect Him not, “the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night,” although of “the times and seasons” he needed not to write unto them, for they were not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief; for which reason he exhorted them to “watch and be sober.” (v. 1—6.) And, finally, he had prayed that they should “be preserved blameless, *unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (v. 23.)

By thus glancing at these several allusions, in his *first* short epistle, we are better prepared to understand the apostle’s design in the *second.* For, by the earnestness and the frequency with which he had thus urged the coming of Christ upon the attention of the Thessalonian church, and probably from the statements of others, they had been thrown into some degree of perturbation, supposing that glorious event just about to be realized. Paul seems to have written his second epistle solely with a view to correct

the mistake into which they had fallen.* He first vindicates God for rewarding his servants, and punishing his enemies “with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, *when he comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired of all them that believe.*” He then proceeds in the beginning of the second chapter to address them, with earnestness and affection, on the time of the Saviour’s advent: “Now, we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not *soon* shaken in mind or *troubled*, neither by spirit, nor by word, *nor by letter as from us*, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” or *instantly*, as *εντόταχεν* ought to be rendered. With this view of the apostle’s design we can never suppose that he now refers to any other than that “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all his saints*,” to which he alluded in his former epistle. Whatever anxiety some may evince to escape from the force of the passage by supposing a “spiritual advent,” the real nature of this coming is already too evident to admit of its being so explained away.

But palpable as the apostle’s meaning now is, the argument to be derived from his after statement acquires additional strength, by the consideration that *ὑπὲρ*, here translated “by” the coming of the Lord, ought to be rendered “of” or “concerning” His coming. Parkhurst, thus correcting the translation of this passage, refers to Whitby and Mac-

* When Dr. Hamilton wishes to repel Mr. Cuninghame’s argument from Matt. xxiv. he affirms (p. 261) that the coming of our Lord was at the destruction of Jerusalem: but when he would deride the premature expectations of the church at Thessalonica, he does not forget (p. 12) that His coming *was to be preceded* by the treading down of Jerusalem, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; although he elsewhere maintains (p. 250,) that His coming *was to be followed* by that calamity. Truly it is not surprising that the laborious minuteness of a certain Millenarian author, in occupying a number of pages with arguments to determine the proper punctuation of a Scripture text, should appear ridiculous to one, who thus, with so much ease—neither assigning a reason, nor offering an apology—can place and re-place the same event at two different periods distant from each other 1800 years, as he finds the necessities of his argument may require. The Doctor’s mode, it will be acknowledged, is the easier and more summary of the two, but to those who sincerely desire to know the mind of the Spirit, (to which it is desirable that he had more frequently attended,) it will not always prove the most satisfactory.

knight among others, as authority—commentators who will not readily be suspected of Millenarian tendencies. This correction gives an entirely different view of the verse, as, without the slightest reference to the context, it clearly demonstrates that the subject of which the apostle now expressly wrote was “*concerning* the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him,” which admits of no spiritual interpretation. Independently, indeed, of this correction, the meaning may be easily ascertained and established. It is evident it could not be the day of their death which the apostle contemplated, else he could have given them no assurance that any previous time should certainly elapse, still less that it would not take place till the destruction of Antichrist. It could not be merely the more general diffusion of the influences of the Spirit in the church or in the world, for this would have occasioned them no “trouble.” And it was no other than the personal coming of the Lord, respecting the time of which the believing Thessalonians had fallen into mistake, and concerning which the Apostle designed to correct them.

What we now have to attend to is, the period assigned by the apostle for this glorious advent of the Redeemer. Guarding them against deceivers, he assures them that that day should not come except there came a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed—the Son of Perdition. He proceeds to state the character of the Papacy, (as recognized by Protestant commentators,) and having adverted to the barrier which the dominant power of Rome Pagan opposed to his manifestation till taken out of the way, he adds, (ver. 8,) “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and **DESTROY WITH THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS COMING.**” This *coming* must therefore be before the Millennium; and if it be of a personal nature in the second verse, it must be the same in the eighth. The same word is used in both cases; and to imagine that the apostle, while professedly correcting a mistake into which his readers had fallen about the *personal* coming of the Lord, should, instead, inform them of the period of a *spiritual* advent, without giving them any intimation of the substitution, is to suppose him guilty of a sophism which would not be practised by any honest man. Besides, it deserves to be remarked, that the word here tran-

slated “*brightness*,” which, Parkhurst observes, the Greek writers particularly apply to *the appearance of some deity*, is in scripture never used but to denote a personal manifestation, as in the following passages relative to Christ’s glorious *appearance* at His return: “I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his *appearing* and his kingdom;” 2 Tim. iv. 1. “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebutable, until *the appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ;” 1 Tim. vi. 14. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious *appearing* of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”* Titus ii. 13. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His *appearing*.” 2 Tim. iv. 8. In all these instances, the word translated “*appearing*” and “*appearance*,” is the very word translated “*brightness*” in the passage before us. How then is it possible to evade the conclusion that Christ’s

* Dr. Wardlaw (p. 519, *et seq.*) not only admits the accuracy of the above substitution “concerning the coming of our Lord,” instead of “*by* the coming,” as given in our translation, (making the correction in quoting the passage,) but states it to have been the apostle’s object here to correct the misapprehension which had arisen from the expressions in his first epistle concerning the personal coming of the Lord. Considering that misapprehension to have been occasioned by the apostle’s “use of the pronoun *we* in his first epistle, “Are we not necessitated,” he asks, “to consider the correction of it as amounting to an intimation that the day of the Lord was *not* to be expected within so short a time” as a life-time? Again he says, (p. 522,) that the apostle gave them “the plainest intimation that the day in question, [the day of the Lord,] was not to come till events had happened which did not admit of its being ‘at hand’ in the sense in which they had by mistake supposed it; that is within their own life-time.” But those “events” to which the Doctor alludes, are the rise, and manifestation, and destruction of the Man of sin, events which will all have happened before the Millennium; and we do think it remarkable, that while the Doctor takes so correct a view of the connexion which there is, in the epistle, between the mistake of the Thessalonians, “concerning the coming of the Lord,” and the correction of that mistake by the apostle, that he should have quoted the entire passage without taking the slightest notice of *the time* at which the apostle *does* say the coming of Christ will take place; for it is not more true that Paul informs them that, *before* the coming of Christ, the Man of sin had to come into being and acquire an ascendancy, than that he also affirms that “*by* the brightness of His coming” this Wicked shall be destroyed.

return will take place at the destruction of Antichrist?—“ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall *consume* with the Spirit of His mouth, [as has been witnessed since the Reformation,] and shall *destroy* with the *brightness* [or glorious appearance] of HIS COMING.”*

The same view of the coming of the Son of Man at the destruction of Antichrist is given by the prophet Daniel. The seventh chapter of his prophecies contains the account of a dream, or vision, in which the prophet saw four beasts, which, Commentators are agreed, represent the great monarchies which have successively had dominion from that time till now—the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. This last appeared to the prophet dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, with great iron teeth, and as breaking in pieces, and stamping the residue with the feet of it, “ and it had ten horns.” While the prophet considered these horns—the kingdoms into which the Roman empire became divided—behold there came up *among them*, another little horn, having eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great

* Any general remarks on Dr. Hamilton’s mode of treating the three Greek nouns used in the New Testament to signify the advent of Christ, are unnecessary, as Mr. Cuninghame—whose thorough acquaintance with the originals, eminently fits him for the work—has in his several pamphlets so fully taken up this part of the argument. We merely observe on the above passage, that the Doctor’s method of *getting through* the overwhelming evidence it contains of the Saviour’s personal return at the destruction of Antichrist is abundantly easy. Assuming that he formerly came at the destruction of Jerusalem—next declaring that he did not then come in person—and lastly asserting, that “ His advent is represented in the same terms on the two latter occasions,” he speedily arrives at the conclusion, (p. 238,) that “ the presumption certainly is, that he will not come in person, either at the overthrow of Antichrist, or the introduction of the Millennium”—between which events he marvellously interposes 75 years, (p. 246,) and seems to imagine he has thus fully confuted Mr. Cuninghame’s argument !!

This is the passage to which we formerly referred as containing “ the sole apparent evidence” which “ after long thought” Mr. Faber could discover in favour of our views. It may therefore be interesting to notice the means by which he succeeds in disposing of it. This he does simply by supposing that from a forged letter the Thessalonian church had been deceived into an expectation of the immediate FIGURATIVE advent of Christ to destroy the Man of sin !! Had they also *been deceived*, then, into the expectation of their immediate figurative “ GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM” ?

things, which “made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.” This *little horn*, it is also agreed, is the Papal Apostasy. Contemplating this horn, the prophet “beheld till the thrones were cast down, [set or placed,] and the Ancient of Days did sit,* whose garment was

* Dr. Hamilton, to supply the place of argument, gives an extract, (p. 234,) from the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, in which it is attempted to vindicate an absurd commentary which Mr. Cunningham has exposed, concluding some equally pointless remarks on this passage, in the following words; “The Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days, or was brought near before Him. The only question then is, where has the Ancient of Days His abode? Where do the Scriptures uniformly represent Him as erecting His throne? If it be on earth, then the coming of the Son of Man was a *descent* according to Mr. Cunningham; if it be in heaven, then the coming of the Son of Man was an *ascent* according to the interpreters, Maclaurin and Scott.” The author of the above is certainly entitled to the merit of *originality*; and should this new species of argumentation ever become admissible, what are at present regarded as indubitable facts will be easily overthrown. If, for example, any gentleman, ignorant of the power and nature of Religious Criticism, should venture to mention his having been, in 1822, at the levee of his late Majesty, held in the palace of Holyrood, he might soon have occasion to blush for his temerity, and have his want of probity thus exposed by some *acute* reviewer: “Where did George the Fourth reside? Where is he *uniformly* represented as having held his Court? If in Edinburgh, then may you have been present at his levee in Holyrood; but, if in London, then, Sir, you endeavour to deceive.” In the prophecy the point to be ascertained is not where the Throne of the Ancient of Days is *usually* placed, but where He is represented as having set these thrones of judgment at the particular time specified. These cannot be confounded with the eternal throne of God. They are only placed while the transactions of the vision are being accomplished. The prophet beheld “till” they were set; and, instead of being in heaven, they are represented in the context as being placed upon the kingdoms described under the emblems of the four destructive beasts. Contemplating the Papal Antichrist which had risen among the other horns of the Roman empire, and considering this horn, whose look was more stout than his fellows, the prophet “beheld [these] till the thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days did sit” in judgment upon him. It was while these thrones were set, and judgment was being executed, that One like the Son of Man came from heaven, which must receive Him “until the times of Restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” These “times” having now arrived, He comes “with the clouds of heaven,” and there is “given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him.”

white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; *I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.* As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions; and, behold, one like the Son of Man *came with the clouds of heaven,* and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 9—14. How fully does this confirm the view given by Paul to the Thessalonians?

Under the representation of seven angels pouring out the vials of God's wrath upon the earth, the book of the Revelation contains a prediction of the judgments which precede the Millennium; by the last of which vials, Antichrist is to be finally destroyed. But after the account of the sixth and before the out-pouring of the seventh vial, there is a remarkable parenthetical intimation given: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, [in judgments upon the Turkish empire, symbolized by that river,] and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of [from] the east might be prepared, [probably the Israelites, called "princes," Ps. xlvi. 8, 9.] And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, for they are the spirits of devils working miracles, [signs or wonders,] which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (*Behold I come as a thief;* blessed is he that watcheth

and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Rev. xvi. 12—17. Then follow the judgments of the last vial: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial," &c. There is no such intimation as is here made of the Coming of the Lord given between the out-pouring of any two of the preceding vials, nor in any other of the prophetic parts of the book of the Revelation. And the figure used—*as a thief*—is that in which Christ himself foretold his personal advent: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, *when He will return* from the wedding.... And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour *the thief* would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also, for *the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*" Luke xii. 35—40. The apostle Peter also assures us, "the day of the Lord will come *as a thief in the night.*" 2 Pet. iii. 10. This distinctive character of Christ's personal return might alone suggest that it is to the same advent the intimation between the sixth and seventh vials refers, "Behold, I come as a thief." But when we reflect that Paul expressly asserts that the destruction of the Man of sin is to be effected by the brightness of Christ's coming—that Daniel's vision presents the view of his coming *with the clouds of heaven* at the same time,—and that this parenthetical intimation is made just before the account of the final destruction of that apostasy, there surely remains no reason to question the fact.

Advancing to the more enlarged account of the utter destruction of that power, and of the apostate nations leagued with it, we find the Saviour represented as present in the dread conflict. The first nine verses of the 19th chapter of the Revelation contains an account of the rejoicing of the saints in heaven, and their aspirations of praise to God for the infliction of His judgments upon her who had corrupted the earth, and because the marriage of the Lamb is come. And in the following part of that chapter, and beginning of the 20th, is declared the signal destruction of the enemies of Christ. In the 11th verse of

the 19th chapter, the apostle "saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." There can be no doubt that this Glorious personage is the blessed Saviour, who is indeed afterwards called expressly the Word of God; and He hath on his vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of Lords, "and on His head were many crowns." He meditates the destruction of His enemies; for the *armies* of heaven, wearing the raiment of saints, followed Him, "and out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should *smite the nations*; and He shall rule them *with a rod of iron*; and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." To intimate the extent of the carnage, the apostle "saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves unto the supper of the Great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Without entering upon any particular examination of the imagery employed, we may merely observe, that the sharp sword going out of the Saviour's mouth is probably designed to intimate, that this work of tremendous destruction will be effected in obedience to His immediate command. This is introduced in the blessing of Moses, already referred to in connection with the restoration of Israel: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, *who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.* The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he shall thrust out the enemy before thee, and *shall say,* Destroy them." Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27. The explanation, sometimes given, of the sword going out of the Saviour's mouth being designed to intimate His bringing the world into subjection to himself, by the preaching of the word, attended by the blessed influences of His Spirit, is quite inconsistent with the whole representation. The angels are commissioned to "pour out the *wrath of God upon the earth;*" (Rev. xvi. 1;) and exper-

ience proves that the contents of the first six of their vials—all of which are light compared with the seventh—have not been of a converting but of a destructive nature. The gospel is indeed at this time to be preached extensively to the nations, calling them to fear God and give glory to Him, on account of these tremendous judgments upon the enemies of religion and of mankind: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven,” says the apostle, immediately before the destruction of mystic Babylon, “having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him, *for the hour of his judgments is come*, and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”* Rev. xiv. 6, 7. Had it been in gracious and benignant influences that Christ was coming to these “kings of the earth, and *their armies*,” there could have been no meaning in the fowls of heaven being summoned to the banquet:—“And all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” This is evidently no other than that destruction of Antichrist which Paul informed the Thessalonians would be effected by the brightness of Christ’s coming.

In a preceding chapter of the book of the Revelation, we have another statement of this final overthrow: “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, [the Roman empire not having been divided at the time the apostle had this celestial vision,] but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and *they that are WITH Him are called, and chosen, and faithful*;” for “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty an-

* How often is the first part of this text quoted, while the latter part, which is the substance of the angelic message, is studiously kept out of view! There is something manifestly wrong, when we are so unwilling to declare, nay, so unwilling to believe, the denunciations of divine indignation upon the enemies of God.

gels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Rev. xvii. 12—14. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh *with* ten thousand of His Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude, ver. 14, 15. On this account "shall all the tribes of the earth mourn," when they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. xxiv. 30. The result of this conflict with the kings of the earth and their armies follows: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles [wonders] before him....these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of His mouth." Satan himself, who has so long roamed the world, seducing men from their allegiance to Heaven's high Majesty, shall be bound and shut up that he may not deceive the nations: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and put a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Rev. xx. 1—3.

Thus are we brought to that "consummation" to which the expounding angel directed Daniel's faith, when "that determined should be poured upon the desolator—to "the Times of the Restitution of all things," until which Peter declared the heavens must receive our Lord—to the blessed epoch announced by Paul, when the Saviour shall utterly destroy the Man of sin "with the brightness of His Coming,"—to the period predicted by our Lord Himself when "the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled,"—and when "the end of the age" shall arrive, for which His disciples longed, and which was afterwards announced by an angel, with awful solemnity, in the hearing of him who was

peculiarly beloved ; "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, *that there should be time no longer* ; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Rev. x. 5—7.

SECTION XX.

FIRST RESURRECTION AND REIGN OF THE SAINTS.

HAVING in our investigations arrived at the end of this age, we proceed farther to inquire, what the Spirit of God has been pleased to reveal concerning "that which is to come." One distinguishing feature of that age is declared by the apostle Paul, when he reminds the saints at Ephesus, that God hath "made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in Himself: that *in the dispensation of the fulness of times*, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." Ephes. i. 9, 10. "And I saw thrones," continues the apostle John, after the account of the destruction of the Antichristian nations, and the binding of Satan, "And I saw thrones, and they [or persons] sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned

with Christ a thousand years. (But the rest* of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.) *This*

* From the word here translated “rest” being in the Greek the same with that translated “remnant,” Rev. xix. 21; Dr. Hamilton, (p. 213,) maintains the parties spoken of to be one and the same. To charge a Doctor of Divinity with unworthy quibbling would be unseemly; but really, when attempts are made to set aside and decry a Scriptural doctrine, and to support an opposite opinion by such an artifice, suspicions will involuntarily arise. What would be thought of the wisdom or candour of him who should gravely maintain that Infidels and Christians must be precisely the same class of men, because he had found in some highly approved theological work, a “remnant” of the one mentioned in *juxta-position* with “the rest” of the other—the *remnant* and the *rest* meaning the same thing? Or, how many would be persuaded that “oil” and “blood” are exactly the same, although he should adduce the fact, that in the Scripture account of the legal ceremonial services, “the rest” of a portion of both are mentioned, within a dozen chapters of each other? Yet such is the nature of the evidence by which Dr. Hamilton would establish that the *slain*, (Rev. xix. 21,) are the whole of those described (xx. 5,) as *the rest of the dead* who live not again till the thousand years be finished; and we much regret to add that Dr. Wardlaw has here followed the same course. Independently of the fact that it is a literal *slaying* of the former that is spoken of—for “all the fowls were filled with *their flesh*”—the sophism may be rendered still more apparent, by bringing together other instances from the New Testament, in which the Greek term that is here translated “rest” and “remnant” occurs. For by following the same line of argument, these Doctors might establish, beyond the power of controversy, not merely the identity of “the remnant” slain, with the “rest” of the dead who lived not again; but they might also prove that both are the very party described, Rev. ix. 20, as “*the rest* of the men which were not killed by these plagues, *yet repented not* of the works of their hands;” and that still we have in Rev. xi. 13, these men, the very “remnant who were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”—“*Oι λοιποι*, the identical remnant who were slain!” exclaims Dr. Hamilton, with an air of triumph. We wonder it did not occur while he thus deceived himself, or endeavoured to practise upon the credulity of his readers, that the remainder of one thing could not be the “identical remnant” of another, and that the character of these *remnants* differ just in proportion to the dissimilarity of the objects to which they apply, this being ascertained only from the connection in which they are found. “The rest” or “remnant” in English, with its equivalent in Greek, merely denotes what is *not included*, whether this be, as in Matt. xxii. 6, “the remnant” of unworthy men who rejected the invitation to the wedding of the king’s son—or, as in Mat. xxv. 11, “the other” virgins who are denied access to the Bridegroom’s presence—or the lusts of “other” things which render the word unfruitful, as in Mark iv. 19—or, as in Luke xxi. 26, “the rest” of the things about which Christ enjoined His disciples to take no thought.

is the FIRST RESURRECTION. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.'" Rev. xx. 4—6. Thus, then, are we brought to the consideration of the much-disputed doctrine of the pre-millennial resurrection of the saints, and their after *reign with Christ during the Millennium.**

Much of the supposed difficulty with respect to the nature of this Resurrection and Reign probably arises from a too frequent neglect of the light which it receives from other parts of Scripture, and the entire oversight even of

* We hope to be forgiven by the Examinator in the Instructor for having preferred the method adopted, although it has brought us thus late to the examination of the passage he has kindly prescribed (p. 482,) as that on which "all discussion should begin, and all demonstrations should finally seek their foundation." We beg to assure him, that it was from no contempt of his prescriptive authority that a different course has been pursued, but simply from a belief that it might be proper first to establish the period of Christ's Return, and from a conviction that the doctrine of our Lord's Millennial advent and reign, is supported by such an abundance of Scriptural Evidence as that it would have stood perfectly secure, even although we were interdicted all reference to the passage in question. The only point here declared, which is not elsewhere revealed, is the *duration* of this reign; and the Commentators, both those who maintain and those who oppose the doctrine of the personal presence of Christ, are, after all, at variance with respect to the meaning of the "thousand years." Some suppose, that the thousand years are given as a round number, merely indicating a long but indefinite time; others believe, they are to be understood as literal years, and therefore that they predict the precise period of the Millennium as 1000 civil years; and a third class maintain, that being prophetic years, having a year for a day, they intimate a period of 365,000 civil years. Although fully aware that there are arguments not destitute of weight in favour of the interpretation of literal years, to us the opinion scarcely appears consistent with other Scriptures. When we consider the frequency with which the prophets speak of the continuance of the Millennium and of Christ's reign on earth, as "for ever," and, in some cases, as "for ever and ever," we are constrained to think such expressions too strong to be used in reference to a period of a thousand literal years. This objection appears still more forcible, when it is remembered, that, in some instances, the "for ever" is put in contrast with the time of Israel's dispersion, as if that were comparatively but a little while. The only additional circumstance here ascertained then is, that this reign is for a limited time—the exact duration of which will not perhaps in this state be known till the event declare.

the preceding context, predicting the coming of Christ and the destruction of his enemies, to which we have adverted. The numerous prophetic annunciations of Messiah's future abode on earth—the evidence already adduced of this being the period of His Personal Return—and the declarations, yet to be noticed, of the resurrection of the dead saints and change of those alive at his coming—these not only constrain us to believe, but to wonder it should ever have been denied, that this resurrection is literal and the reign personal, and that those who live and reign with Christ are His arisen and glorified saints, redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: part of whose heavenly song, in prospect of this honour, being, “We shall reign *upon the earth.*” Rev. v. 9, 10. Indeed, having already so fully proved the Return of Christ before the Millennium, farther examination of this passage to ascertain its meaning may be deemed superfluous. Still, however, it may add confirmation to the faith of some who already believe, enable the doubtful to decide, and convince others who have hitherto been prejudiced against this glorious truth, to attend for a little to some of the reasons adduced for understanding it *spiritually*, to examine their force, and seek to ascertain what farther light may be derived from other scriptures concerning the First Resurrection; for, happily, on this important and interesting doctrine, we have “line upon line, precept on precept.”

It is sometimes said by those who deny a personal reign, that the book of the Revelation being figurative, it is improper to suppose that this is to be literally understood. But the adoption of such a principle of interpretation is not more subversive of a literal than of a spiritual resurrection and reign. For, if the figurative nature of the book, or to speak more correctly, its *symbolical* nature, form an objection to our understanding in one sense the resurrection and reign of the saints, it may be made equally to exclude them in any other. Nor is this the whole of the evil such a mode of interpretation would occasion. We should, besides, be led not only to reject the literal resurrection of the rest of the dead, “small and great,” *after* the Millennium, but also to deny the literal destruction of Antichrist—the binding of Satan—his future release, and the re-extension of his power—his ultimate punishment—and the final judgment.

Not only are all these contained in this symbolical book, but symbols are used in the account of them; as in the description of the beast, and the marking of his followers—the angel's key—the chaining of Satan and setting a seal upon him—and the opening of books for the purpose of judgment. But the use of these symbols does not in the least affect the reality of the events to which they refer: and still less, therefore, will the symbolical character of the book change the nature of real events, in the account of which symbols are not used.*

But again, it has been objected, that it is not the saints

* On this vision seen by John, Dr. Wardlaw remarks, as formerly noticed:—"Did the words occur in a historical or epistolary composition, it would justly be pronounced unnatural, (unless we were specially warned of the writer's purposed deviation from his ordinary style,) to explain them symbolically. Now in a professedly symbolical book, there is the very same force of objection against their being interpreted *literally*. The interpretation is not in harmony with the avowed and universally admitted style of the writer, and the principle on which his entire work is constructed." He therefore asks, "Why are we, in the text, (Rev. xx. 4.) to understand literal thrones of earthly dominion, and a literal corporeal resurrection of men to sit upon those thrones, when all around is symbolical and figurative?" (p. 498.) We have already proved the premillennial Return of Christ from both "historical" and "epistolary" compositions, and might, therefore, without reference to this "symbolical book," require the Doctor's assent to its truth. But we have farther to remark on his principle of interpretation, that the book of Revelation is not so completely symbolical as to demand that *all* its statements be so interpreted; neither does the Doctor always think they do. In addition to the instances cited above, we may yet add other statements contained in this symbolical book which he himself does not scruple to quote as to have a *literal* accomplishment. Besides the fact of his understanding and interpreting literally (p. 510,) the account of the general resurrection in this very chapter, does he not "understand literal thrones of *earthly* dominion," when he quotes Rev. xi. 15, as a proof that at the period of the Millennium, "the kingdoms of *this* world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ?" (p. 477.) "The kingdoms of *this* world" do not in the least lose their significance nor change their meaning because contained in this symbolical book; neither does Dr. Wardlaw think they necessarily should. But if this is not to be understood symbolically, the supposed "force of objection" against the literal interpretation of all other passages is destroyed. And if we may believe, on the statement of this "symbolical book," that the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; we may also be allowed to believe, in the same sense, the apostle's additional statement in the same verse, "and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.)

themselves, but their *souls* that are here said to live. This objection has more speciousness than force. For it is to be observed that a change of condition is here evidently implied—a change from death unto life. The souls, however, had not died, and therefore it could not be said of *them* that they “lived” again. This is farther evident from the contrast between those who “lived and reigned with Christ,” and the rest of the dead, who “lived not *again* till the thousand years were finished.” As in the case of the latter, their living *not* “again,” till the close of this period, implies that they had lived at some former period, but were now dead, and as this cannot be understood of their *souls*, so when it is said of those who are made partakers of the First Resurrection that they “lived,” these must have been brought, by the resurrection of their bodies, from that state of death in which the rest of the dead still continue. Indeed, had not unusual pains been taken to put a strained interpretation on this passage, any process of reasoning for the removal of such an objection must have been altogether unnecessary. The word “soul,” (*ψυχη*,) is in scripture, as well as in common language, frequently used to denote the person; and when thus used by the inspired penmen, we no more experience difficulty in determining its meaning, than we apprehend danger of being misunderstood when, in common conversation, we speak of the number of souls a city contains. Although we had no other information as to what is meant when the apostle Peter speaks of the “few, that is, eight *souls*,” who were saved in the ark, (1 Pet. iii. 20,) who would exclude the *bodies* of Noah and his family from the salvation referred to? When we are informed of the large accession of members made to the church on the day of Pentecost, it is in these words: “and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand *souls*.” Acts ii. 41. And Paul says of those in the ship with him, when cast upon Melita, “And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen *souls*.” Acts xxvii. 37. In these, and similar instances, the very word used by John is introduced, when the *person*, rather than the separate spirit is spoken of. It was when the Lord had breathed the breath of life into its clay tenement, that “*man* became a living *soul*.” Gen. ii. 7. Indeed “soul” is used in Scrip-

ture not only for the person, but sometimes for the body merely ; as in Ps. xlix. 15, “ But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.”* We are therefore fully warranted in believing the apostle’s vision to have been of the literal resurrection of those who had suffered for the cause of Christ, and of those who submitted not to Antichristian authority—“ which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.”

But it is farther objected, that the Apostle’s description of these saints who live and reign with Christ, includes at most only those who have obtained the Martyr’s crown, and those who have resisted the abominations of the man of sin. Some have even endeavoured to restrict the apostle’s language to the souls or persons of the *Martyrs* only. This is however an unwarrantable restriction ; for although the language of our English Translation may suggest the idea that those “ which had not worshipped the beast,” are the same class who “ were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,” it is otherwise in the original. On the authority even of Whitby, (who has furnished his successors with nearly all the arguments we have yet seen adduced against the pre-millennial advent and personal reign of Christ,) the passage ought to be read, “ And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and of them which had not worshipped the beast,” &c. thus clearly marking, what many are ready to deny,—the distinct specification of two classes, first the *martyrs*, and

* The Examinator in the Instructor grants, (p. 485,) that “ the word ‘ souls ’ ($\Psiυχαι$,) is frequently used in the Sacred Writings for persons.” But Dr. Hamilton, who has often loaded Millenarians with a profusion of abuse, substituting sounding epithets for solid arguments, in this instance carries his censure much higher, and would seem to question the wisdom of Him who dictated the passages cited above. “ The Greek,” says he, (p. 204,) “ is not such a scanty language as to be unable to furnish a separate term for each of the ideas conveyed by the words person, soul, and body.” We have no design of attributing such a sentence to wilful captiousness with the language of Inspiration, but would more charitably ascribe it to that over-hasty zeal against the supposed alarming heresy, which deprived him of the power of cool reflection and due investigation, adding it to the multitude of instances which equally prove how untenable is the theory the Doctor maintains, and his anxiety for its support.

secondly the whole number of *testimony-bearers* against the corruptions of the Romish church.

Still, however, it is to be observed that these two classes refer only to the times of Antichristian Idolatry. But this omission of all the prophets and saints of previous ages, appears to have been designed, in order to preserve the unity of the vision. The preceding part being occupied with a prediction concerning the Man of sin, and of the sins and the sufferings he should occasion in the church, the apostle's attention at his overthrow was principally confined to the fate of those who were engaged in the transactions to which the vision thus more immediately relates. In the interval between the period of Antichrist's rise, and that of his destruction at the coming of the Lord, the fidelity of the church has been, and will be, continually put to the test, either by the wiles or the cruelty of that insidious and destructive foe. To the faithful, therefore, who had steadfastly maintained the truth as it is in Jesus amid the terrors of death, or when surrounded by more dangerous temptations to compliance with his devilish devices, the limitation in the passage seems peculiarly appropriate. All who had not been seduced from their allegiance to the Saviour, during the existence of that apostasy and within the reach of its influence, are included, either among those who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God," or among those who, though they may not have been called to lay down their lives for the truth, "had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." When this is considered, it gives rather a peculiar significance to the very limitation on which the objection is founded; the apostle taking especial notice of the privilege of those whose circumstances had formed the subject of the preceding visions. It is however, worthy of notice, that although he *names* no other as sharing the glorious privileges of which they are made partakers, yet the manner in which this part of the vision is introduced, leaves it to be inferred that others are so. For, says the apostle, "I saw thrones, and *they* sat upon them, and judgment was given unto *them*; and [being divinely directed in making the most interesting selection,] I saw [among those on these thrones] the souls [or persons] of them that were beheaded for the

witness of Jesus," &c. Those whom he saw upon the thrones, and to whom judgment was given, do not appear to me merely the two classes to whom he immediately after refers. But for a knowledge of who these others may be, and of God's design with respect to His people in former ages, we must have recourse to other parts of his word, which, as we shall see, contains ample evidence of their enjoyment of the same glorious privilege.

Let us, however, for a moment suppose, that this passage is not to be understood as speaking of a literal resurrection of these saints, but of a resurrection of the *principles* they held, and see how this will accord with the language employed. A resurrection, it will be admitted, pre-supposes *the death* of the object to be raised, and therefore before there can be a resurrection of Christian Principles, they must first have died from the earth. And how does this supposition coincide with the idea generally entertained, that the present laudable exertions for the diffusion of the gospel shall progressively increase, until it be ultimately successful in the conversion of the whole world, and the glorious day of promise be realized in the universal reception of its gracious truths? Christianity has already taken root in far-distant lands, and although its power has not been so extensively manifested as every friend of Jesus must have wished and prayed for, and although we have much occasion to fear that the exertions for its propagation will relax as infidelity prevails, still, we believe, that, at our Lord's return, He shall have trophies of redeeming love from every clime. But on the principles of those who suppose that the Millennium shall be simply the result of Christianity's extending influence, when is it to die, that it may be made to live again in the First Resurrection? Let it not be said that this Resurrection is of the principles of the *martyrs*, and therefore means a greater degree of purity. The principles of the martyrs were just those of the truth as it is in Jesus: the same Scriptures which they enjoyed being now in our hands, and professedly received as the standard of our faith; although it must be acknowledged, that, in early times, they entertained different opinions of some of its truths, as the present necessity of vindicating their sentiments with respect to the time and purpose of the Saviour's return sufficiently testifies. But

the resurrection witnessed by John was not only of those who had sealed their testimony with their blood, but of all who had resisted the blasphemous usurpations of the Man of sin—who “had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands.” Until the principles of all who have maintained the truth in opposition to his errors have become extinct, there can, therefore, be no resurrection of them; and if, as is maintained by those who urge the objection, the Millennium is to be gradually introduced by the gospel’s extending influence, this cannot at all take place. How then can this apply to the First Resurrection? Besides, if this Resurrection meant merely the revival and extensive prevalence of Religion, still we may ask, would such a revival at any future time, after the various out-pourings of the Holy Spirit in different ages, be yet styled “*The FIRST Resurrection*”?

There is another inconsistency in the supposition of Anti-millenarians. These *Principles* having had “part in the First Resurrection, on such the *second death* hath no power.” Now, as upon their hypothesis, the first death of these principles must have taken place before the Millennium, seeing that at that time they should enjoy a resurrection, so we must suppose the *second death* their future decay or extinction.* Not only is this however, quite at variance with the Scriptural account of the nature of the second death, (which means the being cast soul and body

* Dr. Hamilton, (p. 215.) supposes “the second resurrection” to mean “the revival of wicked and irreligious principles and practices;” Dr. Wardlaw also interprets it to be “a most singular re-appearance of their principles and character;” (p. 506;) and Mr. Mason, (Gentiles’ Fulness, p. 212,) in like manner renders it “the great increase of wicked men on the earth.” But although believers are, in Scripture, said to be spiritually “raised from death unto life,” we know of no instance in which a change of an opposite character is so described. Persons under the power of the Wicked One are said to be *dead* in trespasses and sins. Nor is there, in the account given in this chapter of the nations going up upon the breadth of the earth, and encompassing the camp of the saints and the beloved City, a single word which can be made to convey the idea of their malignant attempt being accounted a *resurrection*. Query; Can Dr. Hamilton assign any better reason than his desire to support a theory, for having lengthened, (p. 212,) the Scripture “little season” which succeeds the Millennium, into “centuries”?

into the lake of fire; Rev. xx. 13.) but that even such a death as we are now supposing, or that a death of any kind should again have influence on those who have part in the First Resurrection, is directly opposed to the statement made by the apostle: “Blessed and holy is He that hath part in the First Resurrection, for on such the Second Death [be it what it may, in the opinion of our friends,] hath *no power*.” Yet if Christian Principles are to be understood as those who have “part in the First Resurrection,” we find that when Satan is again loosed from his prison, an apostasy takes place, which shows that he has obtained *much* power over them in *this* sort of Second Death. If, then, it had been of these it was said, “Blessed and Holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection,” could it have been added, “on such, [principles,] the Second Death hath *no power*”?

But the saints whom the apostle describes as having “lived,” in the First Resurrection, shall also “be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign *with* Him a thousand years.” And how is this to be understood of Christian principles? In what possible sense can Christian principles be called “*priests* of God and of Christ”? And in what possible sense can these principles be said to reign “with” Christ?

Avoiding these inconsistencies, and viewing the language in its natural meaning, let us now inquire how the doctrine of a separate “resurrection of the just” accords with other Scriptures. And, as with respect to the period of Christ’s Return at the commencement of the Millennium, we shall find this also unequivocally stated, and fully implied, in many texts both of the Old and New Testaments.

The prophet Isaiah distinctly refers to a resurrection which shall not be enjoyed by all. In his Millennial song, (xxvi.) addressing the Lord, he says of “other lords” who had had dominion over them, “They are *dead*, they shall *not live*; they are deceased, they *shall not rise*.” But the Saviour responds, of another class, “*Thy* dead men *shall live*, *My* dead body shall *they* arise; Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs.” It will be observed that the words “*together with*” in our translation, are supplementary. They are not only unnecessary, but by their insertion the sense is entirely changed. Their

omission gives us the Saviour's endearing recognition of the righteous as the members of His mystical body—"the fulness of Him that filleth all in all;" and their resurrection He accounts as His own;—"My dead body shall *they* arise." And this, it is evident from the succeeding context, (xxvi. 14—21; xxvii. 1,) is just at the commencement of the Millennium, when "the Lord *cometh out of His place* to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. In that day the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan, the piercing Serpent, even Leviathan that crooked Serpent, and he shall slay the Dragon that is in the sea,"—the very scene described in the 19th and beginning of the 20th chapters of the Revelation, as preceding the First Resurrection.

The prophet Daniel had a revelation of events, in a connected order, from his own day down to the period of the restoration of Israel, with the precise number of prophetic days during which the Church should continue under the thraldom of Antichrist, and which should intervene till the commencement of the Millennium. At the close of this historical prediction a most enlivening assurance was vouchsafed to himself, in connection with that happy time. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, and five and thirty days, [from the rise of Antichrist.] But go thou thy way *till the end be*, for thou shalt rest, and *stand in thy lot* at the *end of the days.*"* Dan. xii. 12.

Nor is it Daniel alone who shall enjoy this distinguished privilege. The prophet Zechariah says, "And the Lord my God SHALL COME, and ALL the saints with thee." Zech. xiv. 4. Here, then, is a proof that at the premillennial coming of the Lord, He will be attended by *all* His saints. That this is not at the consummation of all things, but at

* In understanding this to imply the prophet's resurrection, Mr. Mason will observe that the connection in which we have placed the passage, renders it unnecessary to go farther "to look for a meaning of that clause 'thou shalt stand in thy lot,' which would make the sense of this verse consistent with other parts of the Sacred Oracles." (Gentiles' Fulness, p. 200.) That it is in perfect consistency, our whole argument demonstrates. What "days" are meant is too obvious to require comment. They can be no other than the 1335 mentioned in the preceding verse, quoted above.

the Millennium, is evident from the context, which we have already considered, (p. 93.) When He then comes, “ the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one....and Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.” ver. 9, 11.

Isaiah predicts a period when the Lord “ will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, [“ the covering that covered the face of all the peoples,” *Louth,*] and the veil that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death in victory.*” What could be more explicit? And this also is at the Millennium, when “ the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away *from off all the earth*, for the Lord hath spoken it.” Is. xxv. 7, 8. This prophecy, having the period of its accomplishment plainly declared, is not only in itself a proof of the First Resurrection, but throws light upon another prediction, by the prophet Hosea, equally definite in its nature, but the period of which, from the abruptness of the transitions, is much more obscure : “ I will ransom them,” says the Lord, “ from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” Hos. xiii. 14. It cannot be easily ascertained from the context, *when* this is to take place. But prophetic times are often beautifully illustrated by allusions to Old Testament predictions in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. So it is in the instance before us. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian Church, and treating fully of the subject, connects these predictions of Isaiah and Hosea, as *both* to be fulfilled in the resurrection of the just : “ So when this corruption,” says he, “ shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS *the saying that is written*, (by Isaiah,) Death is swallowed up in victory, [and, accommodating slightly that from Hosea,] O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?” 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. By thus uniting these predictions, as to be fulfilled at one time, the apostle determines that of Hosea to be also at the Millennium. For, if by the context Isaiah’s prediction is ascertained to be at the Millennium, and if the apostle asserts that both shall be brought to pass at the same time, it neces-

sarily follows that Hosea's prediction also refers to the Millennial period as that when "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth." And it is farther ascertained from this quotation by Paul, that the resurrection of those "that are Christ's at His coming," of which he is treating, will be at the Millennium, that being the period predicted by Isaiah, with whose prophecy Paul connects the resurrection of the just, for "*then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Accordingly, the *coming* of the Lord is announced by the Prophet in the very next verse: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, *This* is our God, *we have waited for Him*, and He will save us; This is the Lord; we have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

Is. xxv. 9. This is He we expected now come.

In the extracts made from the Prophets, it has been seen that even the Inferior Animals are, at the Restitution of all things, to have their natures restored, that they may live in the state of harmony in which they existed at creation's dawn. For the punishment of man's sin, the curse was made to operate with baneful influence on the irrational and inanimate creatures. But even of this triumph over God's creation, Satan will be despoiled at the Millennium, while he himself is bound. For their release at this period, the apostle Paul, in beautiful figure, represents the whole creation as groaning, connecting with it the redemption of *the bodies* of the children of God: "For I reckon," says he, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation *waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*—(for the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but on account of him who hath subjected the same)—*in hope* that the creation itself also *shall be delivered* from the bondage of corruption *into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travailleth in pain together until now; *and not only they but ourselves also*, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, [who have the Spirit as the first-fruits or earnest of our future hopes,] even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *waiting*

for the adoption, *the redemption of our body.*"* Rom. viii. 18—23. It was the sin of man which "subjected" the irrational Animals to all the sufferings they endure. The cause

* We have inserted the passage according to Dr. Wardlaw's rendering and punctuation, as more perspicuous than that in our translation. We would however, also venture a remark on his interpretation. "I freely admit," says he, (p. 471,) "that looking at the *immediate context*, we might naturally be led to conceive the 'manifestation of the sons of God' to be the time commencing with, and succeeding the resurrection of the just." In this we cordially concur, and beg to add, that we consider "the immediate context," preceding and succeeding, as perfectly legitimate evidence of the period to which the apostle refers. "I have no doubt," the Doctor again says, "that the *full* import of the phrase, 'the manifestation of the sons of God,' does remain to be realized at the resurrection of the just—the 'adoption, even the redemption of their body,' for which the 24th verse represents them [“the creation”—which the Doctor understands of the Inferior creation,] as longing with the earnestness of a burdened spirit." (p. 472.) But he speaks of the "opening" and "commencement," as well as of the "full" manifestation of the sons of God; and while he applies the latter term to the *close* of the Millennium, he regards it as warrantable to use the former in reference to the Millennium itself. This, however, is a distinction of which the apostle gives not the slightest hint. He speaks of only *one* period as that of the "manifestation of the sons of God;" and this is that of "the adoption, even the redemption of *our body.*" Neither form of expression admits of degrees, although the Doctor supposes that the Millennium "may well be designated 'the manifestation of the sons of God,' when they and their cause shall appear universally triumphant." But it is only *the resurrection* of which the apostle speaks as "the adoption, even the redemption of *our body*;" and for this very time he represents the *creation* as "waiting" and "groaning." If, then, their deliverance from the burden imposed upon them is to take place at the commencement of the Millennium, *then* also must be the resurrection of the just,—for it would be quite improper to say they *groan* "WAITING FOR *the manifestation of the sons of God,*" if their *deliverance* were to take place 1000 years *earlier* than that "manifestation." Such an interpretation appears still more inconsistent, when we observe that the creation's deliverance would not only be made to precede thus long the "redemption of *our body*," but that by placing our "redemption" subsequent to the Millennium, we would put it posterior even to what we regard as the term of existence allotted to the inferior creation, and thus make them to be "groaning," and "hoping," and "waiting in earnest expectation," not, as the apostle represents, for the time of their *deliverance*, but for the time of their *annihilation*. If there were no premillennial resurrection of the just, we cannot conceive that the inferior creation would be said to *look forward* to the period of "the redemption of *our body*," as that of *their* deliverance at the Millennium. This is a difficulty from which the Antimillenarian can never be relieved by any view of the continuity and identity of a particular community.

was not in themselves, for they were “made subject to vanity, *not willingly*, but on account of him who hath subjected the same.” But at the Millennium, as we have already shown, (p. 77,) they “also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.” This deliverance they shall enjoy when we believers, receive “the redemption of our body,” and therefore “the earnest expectation of the creation *waiteth FOR the manifestation of the sons of God.*” Thus does the apostle connect the restoration of their natures, at the Millennium, with the manifestation of the sons of God, when they also shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of His children. And as “the manifestation of the sons of God,” for which the creatures wait in earnest expectation, is “the redemption of our body,” it follows that our resurrection must take place at the commencement of the Millennium, that being the period when the creation “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.”

But decisive as these clear and beautifully connected illustrations of such Old Testament prophecies are, the doctrine of a separate resurrection of the just may also be directly proved from other passages in the New Testament. In reply to the cavils of the Sadducees, our Lord himself said, “the children of ‘this age’ marry and are given in marriage, but *they who shall be ACCOUNTED WORTHY to obtain ‘that age,’* and the resurrection from the dead, [or, as it ought rather to have been rendered, *out of, or from amongst* the dead,*] neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and *are the children of God,* being the children of the resurrection.” Luke xx. 34—36. It is not “the resurrection *out of the STATE of the dead*” that is spoken of, but a resurrection *out of or from among dead ones*, or dead persons.

* The same word here used occurs in this sense, in the following passages : “A good man, *out of* the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, *out of* the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.” Matt. xii. 35. “God did visit the Gentiles to take *out of* them, a people for his name.” Acts xv. 14. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you *out of* the world, therefore the world hateth you.” John xv. 19. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Rev. v. 9. “Wherefore, brethren, look ye *out [from]* *among* you, seven men of honest report.” Acts vi. 3. “For every High Priest taken *from among* men is ordained for men.” Heb. v. 1.

The same word that is used by our Lord in the 37th verse when he says, “Now that *the dead* are raised,” (clearly the *persons dead*,) he here employs when he speaks of “the resurrection from [amongst] *the dead*.” ver. 35. But without at present insisting on the peculiarity of expression in the original of this and other passages where the resurrection of the just is spoken of in distinction from the general resurrection—being called the resurrection “from amongst” the dead—it is obvious that the resurrection of which the Saviour here speaks, and also “the age” for which they are raised, are not to be obtained by all. There are only some who “shall be accounted *worthy*” of this high privilege; and these, we are expressly told, “are the children of God”—nay, that they are his children is implied in the very fact of their “being” the children, of this resurrection. And as John says of those to whom he refers as being made partakers of the First Resurrection, that they are not only blessed and holy, but that “on such the second death hath no power,” so the Saviour also says of those “who shall be accounted worthy to obtain” it, that “neither can they die any more.”*

* The Examiner in the Instructor, (p. 536,) has endeavoured to construct an argument against the doctrine of the premillennial resurrection, from the fact of the immortality of the arisen saints. His objection had been perfectly just if it were maintained that during the Millennium there should be none living in the flesh. All his remarks on this head, however, are founded on a misapprehension of Mr. Irving’s statements. Millenarians as fully admit as does the Examiner himself, the immortality and incorruptibility of the resurrection saints. But that there is another class at that time upon the earth, is evident from the prophecies: “For the child *shall die* an hundred years old.” Is. lxv. 20. There will not only be those who “live and reign with Christ,” but there will also be those who *are reigned over*.

Dr. Wardlaw’s mistakes on this subject are still more surprising, as he appears to have read the Dissertations of Ben Ezra, which clearly unfold this doctrine, specifying the distinction between the resurrection saints and those still in the flesh. Yet strange to tell, the Doctor, “on the Millenarian hypothesis,” sees no place for the apostasy after the Millennium, but by supposing it to be a combination “of the wicked dead, after they are raised from their graves!” (p. 510.) He again takes for granted that Millenarians believe that there will be none living in the flesh during the Millennium, since he considers it an argument against our system that *death* is to be “the last enemy.” (p. 510.) And subsequently he asks with wonder, (p. 516,) “What becomes of ‘the seed of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them,’ if during that age they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage?”

On another occasion when our Lord was inculcating upon one of the chief Pharisees the duty of making his feasts for the poor, who could not make him a return, He promised that for so doing he should be rewarded “at the resurrection *of the just*:” “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed *at the resurrection OF THE JUST.*” Luke xiv. 13, 14. And let it be remarked, that here it is not the resurrection “from amongst” the just, but “*at the resurrection of the just.*”

To this resurrection the Saviour must have referred, (John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54,) when He promises to raise up believers “at the last day.” *Day* is, in Scripture, frequently applied to an indefinite period of time. Thus the Saviour said on a certain occasion, to the Jews, (John viii. 56,) “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see *my DAY.*” Again, the “*forty years*,” during which the Israelites traversed the wilderness, are, by the Psalmist and the apostle Paul, called “*the DAY of temptation.*” Ps. xcv. 8—10. Heb. iii. 8, 9. So also is the period of the Millennium called a Day: “the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In *that DAY* there shall be one Lord, and His name One.” Zech. xiv. 9. The same form of expression is common among ourselves. Thus we speak of “Newton, and the men of *his day*,” when we refer, not to any particular day of his life, but to the period at which he and his contemporaries lived. Nay, is it not also common to speak of the Millennium itself as “*the coming DAY*,” and “*the glorious DAY*”?

But it is also to be remarked, that the resurrection of which the Saviour here speaks, is promised as a special blessing to be bestowed on believers. This it would not be if all were raised at the same time. Nor is the promise of this resurrection only held out as a special blessing, but this being the only promise made to them implies the high value of such an honour: “and I will raise him up at the last day.” This language would no doubt be perfectly intelligible and distinct to the Jews, who from the prophecies cited in the preceding part of this inquiry, were prepared to expect the resurrection of the saints at the period when the kingdom should be restored to Israel. For however reluctant they were to receive literally the predictions of a suffer-

ing Messiah, they anticipated with delight the accomplishment of those relative to the period when “the Lord shall be King over all the earth,” and when “the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee.” Zech. xiv. 5, 9. Such of them therefore, as were brought to the acknowledgment and reception of Him in his mediatorial character, on having their faith directed forward to the “last day,” —the period of the Saviour’s Return, as that at which the resurrection of the saints shall take place—would at once recognize the allusion to the Millennial day. And it is only to the righteous the gracious assurance of Jesus was now given, that He “will raise him up at the last day.” It is only to those whom the Father hath given Him—to those who believe on Him—to those who are drawn by the Father,—and to those who, having eaten His flesh and drank His blood, have eternal life. From the speciality of the promise therefore, the Saviour plainly refers to the First Resurrection, the characters being, as the apostle John expressively designates them, “blessed and holy.” And, instead of making any allusion to a natural day, we must understand this “Last Day” as the period of Millennial bliss—the last great division of time prior to the general resurrection—to that period which the apostle Peter calls “*the last TIME*,” when he speaks of the “inheritance” of the saints being “*reserved in heaven*,” ready to be then *revealed*. 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

It was doubtless the same resurrection which the apostle Paul earnestly desired “if by any means” he might attain. (Phil. iii. 11.) Warning the Philippian Church of the enmity of the carnal Jews, who held circumcision as being necessary to salvation, he notices his own pretensions on this ground; but having “no confidence in the flesh,” he reckons these advantages as worthless in themselves. The privileges which had been of gain to him, and which might have raised him to worldly dignity among his countrymen, he counted as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ for whom he suffered. His great desire now was that he might know *the power* of Christ’s resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, even if this should be by being made conformable to Him by a violent death. And the reason of this self-denial, and the hope which sustained him, he tells us, was, “if by any means He might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,” or rather, as in this

instance also it ought to have been translated, “from amongst the dead.” The resurrection at which he aimed, it is evident, was not to be obtained by all, for it was a *privilege* he was anxious to secure;* yet all will be raised at the general resurrection. It must therefore have been one of a particular kind which the apostle so earnestly desired to attain,—doubtless the separate “resurrection of the just.”

That there will be a peculiar resurrection at Christ’s return is obvious from Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians. (xv. 23.) The apostle, speaking fully of the resurrection, says, “But every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits; afterwards, THEY THAT ARE CHRIST’S *at his coming*.” But if at the coming of Christ, the general resurrection will take place, why does not the apostle merely mention, in general terms, the resurrection *of all*, instead of thus limiting it to those “that are Christ’s?” It has indeed been affirmed, that, as the apostle immediately adds, “Then cometh the end,” that this must be at the same time, or just after it. But the text gives no countenance to any such opinion. The apostle’s object in the passage was to declare the *order* of the resurrection, which he does as being in three distinct divisions: “Every man in his own order—Christ the first-fruits—afterwards they that are Christ’s at His Coming—then cometh the end.” And as between the resurrection of Christ (the first fruits) and that of those who are His at his Return, about 1800 years have already elapsed; so may there be with equal propriety, the thousand years’ reign of Christ between their being raised and the general resurrection at “the end.” Accordingly, the apostle, in the following verses, actually places the duration of Christ’s Kingdom between the period of His Coming and the end. For the Saviour himself, after having given the indications of His return, instructs his disciples that when these come to pass they may know “that *the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*” Luke xxi. 31. But, at “the end” referred to by

* Should it appear incredible, we can assure such of our readers as may not have seen Dr. Hamilton’s work, that he endeavours to escape from the force of this passage, by the extraordinary expedient of denying altogether its being a *literal* resurrection which Paul strove to attain. “The apostle,” he says, (p. 196,) “declares that though spiritually alive and risen with Christ; he was not completely delivered from *spiritual death*, and was labouring to lay hold on all the honour and blessedness of the spiritual resurrection from the dead”!!

the apostle, he informs us the kingdom shall be *delivered up* to the Father: “Then cometh the end, when He shall have *delivered up* THE KINGDOM to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, For *He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.* The *last* enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He [the Father] hath put all things under His feet....and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

1 Cor. xv. 24—28. As, then, the kingdom only commences at Christ’s return, and as Death is the last enemy which shall be destroyed before the kingdom be delivered up, there must be the period of its whole duration between the resurrection of those who are Christ’s at His coming, and that of those over whom death holds dominion till the period when the kingdom shall come to an end.*

* The Reviewer in the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, though extremely desirous of delaying the resurrection of the righteous till “the end,” yet in his criticism on the Greek adverbs translated in the above passage, “*afterwards*” and “*then*,” makes an acknowledgment totally subversive of the argument he labours to support. “*Eτερα* and *επιστρεψα*, as well as their English equivalents,” he admits, (as quoted by Dr. Hamilton, p. 187,) “when they happen to denote sequence of time, may denote any sequence you please,—either immediate or remote,—either that in which the events follow each other rapidly, and consequently at short intervals, or that in which they follow each other slowly, and consequently at long intervals. You may say, properly enough, a man winked *first* with the one eye, *then* with the other, and *after that* with the other again; and you may say, with equal propriety, the world was *first* made, *then* was it drowned by the deluge, and *afterwards* it will be consumed by fire. The *then* and the *afterwards* are precisely the same in both these cases, although in the one case each interval of the sequence occupies only the twinkling of an eye, while in the other it occupies many centuries, or even Millenniums.” The reviewer himself then being judge, no argument could have been derived for a simultaneous resurrection of the just and unjust, from the words “*then* cometh the end,” immediately following the account of the resurrection of those “that are Christ’s at His coming,” even if the passage had contained no other evidence by which the opposite is established. But as we have shown above, between the coming of Christ and the end of all things, when the last enemy, death, shall be finally destroyed, the apostle interposes the whole reign of Christ, the Kingdom being only “nigh at hand,” when the signs of His Coming are seen, and at “the end,” the apostle informs us that the Kingdom is to be delivered up, “for *He must reign till he hath put all enemies under His feet,*” the last enemy being destroyed in the final resurrection.

Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, (iv. 14—17,) comforts them concerning their deceased friends in Christ, that they should not sorrow as those who have no hope: “For, if we believe,” says the apostle, “that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep *in Jesus* will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we [believers] who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [or precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; [that is, before the living be changed;] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and *so shall we ever be with the Lord.*” Here again it is to be observed, that at the coming of Christ it is only those who “sleep *in Jesus*” that God brings with Him—it is only “the dead *in Christ*” who rise before the change takes place upon the living—and it is only the *righteous living* who shall be caught up in the clouds, for they shall be ever “with the Lord,” a privilege which the unrighteous shall not enjoy.*

So again, in a passage to part of which we have already referred in noticing those from Isaiah and Hosea, the same apostle addressing the Corinthian Church, (1 Cor. xv. 51—55,) says, “Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in

* Dr. Wardlaw has some remarks, (p. 514) on the above passage, from which it would seem he considers that he has destroyed the evidence to be derived from it in proof of two resurrections, by pointing out a mistake into which some have fallen, in supposing the expression “the dead in Christ shall rise first” to refer directly to the resurrection of the *righteous DEAD* as preceding that of the *wicked DEAD*. But the passage affords evidence which the correction does not in the least affect. True, the apostle speaks of the precedence which “*the dead in Christ*” shall have over the *living righteous*, in being first glorified; but it is no less true that he does not speak of the *resurrection* of ALL the dead as *simultaneous*. The change upon the *righteous living* is not to be preceded by the *general resurrection*, but only by that of “*the dead in Christ*,” clearly implying that *all* are not then raised. For unless there were *two* resurrections, why should the apostle, instead of merely saying the change upon the living would not take place till after the *resurrection of THE dead*, thus restrict the precedence to “*the dead IN CHRIST*”?

the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound,) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed ; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, [in Isaiah,] Death is swallowed up of victory : [And in Hosea,] O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?” Having already proved from the prophet Isaiah, that the accomplishment of *his* prediction is at the Millennium, and by consequence this of Paul’s also at the same time, we revert to the passage now, merely to prove that it is the resurrection of believers *only* of which the apostle speaks. This, then, is evident from the forty-third verse, for it is only of the believer’s body it can be said, “it is sown in dishonour, it is *raised in glory*,” for the wicked shall be raised to shame and contempt. Those of whom the apostle speaks he farther describes as those who have not only borne the image of the *earthly* Adam, but who shall also bear the image of “the Lord from heaven.”* ver. 47—49.

* This passage the Examinator in the Instructor, (p. 536,) applies to the resurrection of all; although, as we have shown, the context limits it to that of the saints. Its taking place at “*the last trump*,” he appears to consider as militating against the doctrine of a separate resurrection of the just; for, quoting the Greek words, he asks, “Is there any after this?” And then, very conveniently, converting the *trump* into the *resurrection* itself, he asks, “If this is the last resurrection, then where is the *first* of the bodies of the saints?” When he shall have proved this to be the last “resurrection,” we may perhaps give him some additional evidence for “*the first* of the bodies of the saints :” and meanwhile beg to commend to his serious perusal what we have now produced. From the spirit he displays, there is ground to hope that should he be convinced of his error, he will not refuse to make the acknowledgement, as some reparation to the injured truth. The temper certain others have displayed in their opposition, leaves little to be hoped in their case.

Still, however, with respect to “*the last trump*,” it certainly implies that some precede it. But, excepting that in the Apocalypse, there is no other series of trumpets mentioned in Scripture as subsequent to the times of the apostles, to which series, although the Apocalypse was not then written, this inspired penman might be directed to refer. And as it is just at the sounding of the *seventh* trumpet, (the last of the Apocalyptic series,) that the destruction of Babylon is effected, immediately before John announces the First Resurrection, this also tends to the support of our argument.

So also, immediately after the tribulation predicted, when the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, as announced by our Saviour himself, His angels are sent to gather "*His elect*" only, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, while all the tribes of the earth mourn. Mat. xxiv. 31. Then also, "shall two be in the field, the *one shall be taken*, and the other *left*; two grinding at the mill, the *one shall be taken*, and the other *left*." Mat. xxiv. 40, 41. When, on another occasion, our Lord, speaking of this very subject, made a similar statement, His disciples asked "where," or whither would they be taken when thus removed from their worldly companions? Jesus answered, "wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." Luke xvii. 37. This figure is again used, Mat. xxiv. 28; and is well explained by Paul, when he says, "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds *to meet the Lord in the air*, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Now, if there had been only one resurrection of the dead, and at the same time a change of all the living, and this were to be at the coming of the Lord, How is it that a resurrection of the saints is clearly predicted as to be enjoyed at the Millennium, and that in all these passages from the New Testament, speaking of the resurrection at Christ's return, the wicked are carefully excluded, and that our Lord expressly declares that there is an age all are not accounted worthy to obtain, and a resurrection peculiar to the children of God? Are we not compelled to admit that there will be a separate "resurrection of the just," and that this is indeed that "better resurrection," the hope of which animated and sustained the saints of old in torture and in death, (Heb. xi. 14,) and which all the righteous shall obtain? And can it be denied that this will be at the sounding of the seventh or last Apocalyptic trumpet, when Christ takes His great power and reigns? — "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, small and great." Rev. xi. 18. Does not this imply that

"the time of the dead," which is just at the destruction of Antichrist, is the period of their resurrection; and that their "reward" is that which John saw bestowed on those who had been slain for the word of God, and those who had not submitted to the authority of the beast?—"and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the First Resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection."

Rev. xx. 4—6.

But, before leaving this part of the subject, fidelity to the divine word requires that we should notice a passage which seems to be regarded as a very doubtful auxiliary, both by those who oppose the doctrine of a separate resurrection, and by some who espouse it: "And many of them," said the expounding angel to the beloved Daniel, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. xii. 2, 3. That this cannot be the general resurrection is evident not only from the time at which it takes place, but also from the fact that it is not of ALL the dead, but only of "*many of them* who sleep in the dust of the earth." That it is at the restoration of Israel is obvious from the verse immediately preceding: "And at that time [when the Turkish empire shall be destroyed*] shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; [the days of tribulation immediately after which the Saviour predicted His return. Mat. xxiv. 27;] and at that time *thy people shall be delivered*, every one that shall be found written in the book." On the other hand, there is a seeming inconsistency between this passage and those already quoted, which take no notice of *any* being raised at the coming of the Lord to shame and contempt. Here, how-

* It will be seen we prefer the interpretation of the preceding chapter given by Sir Isaac Newton, and generally received, as referring to the Ottoman empire, rather than the application made of it by Mr. Irving to the Infidel Antichrist.

ever, it is explicitly declared, that, at the restoration of Daniel's people, this will be the awful fate of "some," and we do not feel at liberty either to doubt the fact or overlook the prediction. Not a few, indeed, understand the resurrection "to everlasting life" as at the *commencement* of the Millennium; and that to "shame and everlasting contempt" as at *its close*. This, however, is a distinction which the prophecy does not admit. Both classes rise at the same time; and, *united*, they make the "many" who "shall awake." The resurrection of "some" *to shame and contempt*, is therefore as really at the restoration of Israel as that of "some" others *to everlasting life*. Perhaps the seeming inconsistency may, however, be removed, by understanding the "some" raised to shame as forming so small a portion of those who shall then "awake" from the dust, as not to be noticed in the more general statements referring primarily to the hopes of believers and addressed to their faith. And, if we farther believe these to be men who in life were superlatively wicked, it will tend to throw light on some passages of Scripture otherwise obscure.

There are few characters more decidedly reprobated in the Sacred Writings than that of Balaam. Although an acknowledged "prophet," he "*loved the wages of unrighteousness.*" (2 Pet. ii. 15, 16.) He fervently sought to be allowed to curse the children of Israel, that he might receive reward from their enemies. But "it pleased the Lord to *bless Israel*;" and Balaam being chosen the unwilling instrument of Jehovah's purpose, "The Spirit of God came upon him," and repeatedly was he constrained to deliver the unwelcome message from the Lord. His renewed efforts to procure a reversion of the blessing, only occasioned the enlargement of its specifications, and his concluding words to Balak the King of Moab confirm the opinion we are now seeking to illustrate:—"And now behold, I go unto my people; come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people *in the latter days*. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: *I shall see him, but not now;*

I shall behold him, but *not nigh*: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, [or, ‘smite through the princes of Moab,’ *marg.*] and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that *shall have dominion*, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, [‘that warred against Israel,’ *marg.*] but his latter end shall be, that he perish for ever. And he looked on the Kenites; and he took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock: Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Ashur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?” Num. xxiv. 14—23. These verses thus contain evidence both of the Saviour’s premillennial advent, and of Balaam’s resurrection at that time. There is little reason to doubt that Christ is the “Star” and the “Sceptre” whom Balaam was to see. He refers not to any vision he then obtained, for it was to be “*not now*,”—“*not nigh*,” but—“in the latter days.” Now this Star is to “smite through the princes of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.” This appears plainly to refer to those times immediately before the Millennium, when, as we have already shown, (p. 55,) the Israelites are to spoil Edom and Moab and the children of Ammon; and to the awful destruction by which the world shall then be overtaken Balaam appears to refer, when he says, “Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?” ver. 23. Some have indeed supposed David or Solomon to be the Star spoken of, because of their having subdued the countries here mentioned. But this Star, Balaam is to “see,” and it is not the subjugation, but the *destruction* of these nations which is predicted, thus corresponding with other prophecies concerning “the latter days.” But as Balaam will not be found among the righteous, his beholding the Saviour at this time is a proof of the premillennial resur-

rection of some of the wicked—and the finger of inspiration points to his sin as peculiarly aggravated; it is that of *a monster*.

There are other passages which countenance the idea that some whose guilt has been awfully aggravated, will be also raised at the commencement of the Millennium, as monuments of God's wrath. In a passage already quoted, (Is. xxvi.) this idea is distinctly brought before us. "Thy dead men shall live; *my* dead body shall *they* arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs." This resurrection of the righteous is here contrasted, in its happy nature, with what immediately follows. For while they are said tranquilly to *arise*, and are called to "awake and sing" in holy joy, it is added, "And [or, 'but'] the earth *shall cast out* her **GIANTS**:"—for so it appears the word here translated "dead" ought to have been rendered.—Our translators in this, as in some other cases, not perceiving the idea of the text, but certain that the *Rephaim* must be dead, since the earth is called to cast them out, made that substitution which doubtless must have appeared to them most distinct, but which does not convey the precise idea of the Original. In almost every other instance, this word has been translated *giants*, (as in Deut. ii. 20. Josh. xii. 4. 1 Chron. xx. 4, 6, 8;) and appears always to signify men either tall in stature or great in crime. When therefore they are to be "cast out" of the earth at the period of the Millennium, in contrast to those who shall "awake and sing," it may be viewed as confirmatory of the opinion that the "some" who shall awake to shame and contempt are the *giants in crime*—the pre-eminently wicked.

We meet these Rephaim, or giants, in another prediction by Isaiah, of the overthrow of the King of Babylon: "Hell from beneath," says the prophet, "is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming. It stirreth up *the giants* for thee, *even the chief ones* of the earth." Is xiv. 9. Although the prophet, in some parts of the prediction, seems to connect it with the fate of ancient Babylon, there are many circumstances which determine its peculiar application to the last Antichrist. In the third verse, we are expressly told that it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give the house of Israel rest from their sorrow

and fear, and from the hard bondage they are made to serve. At the destruction of this power "the whole earth is at rest and is quiet, they break forth into singing." ver. 7. His pride and blasphemy are also just what is predicted of Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God....I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." ver. 13, 14. And as in the passage already noticed, the giants are "cast out" of the earth at the Millennium, so it is remarkable that here not only does hell stir up the giants for this wicked king, but a similar fate is predicted for himself: "All the kings of the nations," continues the prophet, "even all of them lie in glory, every one in his own house. *But thou art cast out of thy grave*, like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of them that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcass trodden under foot. *Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial*, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people." ver. 18—20.

In referring to the war of the Antichristian nations, immediately before the Millennium, (Rev. xix. 20,) we have already seen that "the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles [or wonders] before him....these both were cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." And although the binding of Satan, and casting him into the bottomless pit, during the Millennium, does not seem to include his condemnation to *this* place of misery, yet the same portion awaits him after it; and when the nations which go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, have been devoured by fire from heaven, "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet *are*," during that happy time. Rev. xx. 10.

But if this king of Babylon, spoken of by Isaiah, be indeed the same Antichrist who is, in John's vision, "cast into a lake of fire," while those who will be his associates in the last great conflict are slain, and "all the fowls of heaven are filled with their flesh," then it appears this place of torment is to be upon the earth, and within the view of men, for the prophet says, "Yet thou shalt be brought

down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They *that see thee* shall narrowly *look upon thee*, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness?" ver. 15—17. So, also, in the close of this prophecy, Isaiah gives a similar but more distinct prediction of this place of punishment, in connection with the Millennium: "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and *look upon the carcasses of the men* that have transgressed against me; for *their worm shall not die*, neither shall their fire be quenched; and *they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*" Is. lxvi. 22—24. Thus will be displayed the divine indignation against sin, in the visible punishment of those so raised to shame and contempt; "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the king it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it." Is. xxx. 33.

Nor will this view of those pre-eminently wicked, "the giants" in depravity, being raised to *shame and contempt*, at the commencement of the Millennium, appear inconsistent with the more general statements of the holy character and happy state of those who shall enjoy the First Resurrection, when we attend to instances of a similar kind in Scripture. Thus, in Eccles. iii. 20, it is said, "All go unto one place. All are of the dust, and *ALL turn to dust again.* But this cannot be understood as including absolutely the *whole* human family. For, besides the translated two who went direct from earth to heaven, we know that "we shall *not all sleep,*" but that those believers who are "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," being changed, shall be rendered incorruptible and immortal. But these exceptions do not affect the great truth uttered by the preacher, that all die, and being buried moulder in the dust. Another similar instance occurs in the statement by the apostle Paul of the order of the resurrection, in which he overlooks altogether that of certain saints immediately after Christ had arisen; "And the

earth did quake, and the rocks rent," narrates the evangelist Matthew, in his account of Christ's crucifixion, " and the graves were opened; and *many bodies* of the saints which slept arose, *and came out of the graves AFTER His resurrection*, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Mat. xxvii. 51—53. Yet the apostle speaking expressly of the order of the resurrection, (1 Cor. xv. 23,) wholly overlooks these, although the evangelist says they were *many*: " Every man in his own order," says the apostle, " Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." Although, in reality, those who arose immediately after Christ's resurrection were "many," still the number of these saints was small compared with that of those who "are Christ's at His coming," and therefore no mention is made of them. So, referring to the Millennial period, the prophet Isaiah (lx. 21) says, "thy people also shall be *all* righteous :" although speaking elsewhere of this period, he informs us, that "the *sinner* being an hundred years old shall be *accursed*." Is. lxv. 20. In like manner, then, may there be 'some' raised to shame and contempt, without affecting the general truth, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection, on such the second death hath no power," being "accounted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from among the dead."*

But there is an additional circumstance mentioned by

* In an essay in the Morning Watch, (Vol. II. pp. 329—351,) we have endeavoured, by a minute analysis of the apostle's language, to show that the Heresy with which Paul charges Hymeneus and Philetus, (2 Tim. ii. 16—19) "who concerning the truth have erred saying that the resurrection is past already," was not what is generally supposed. There is no ground, we maintain, for supposing that they substituted the *conversion* of believers for the resurrection which it is stated they impugned ; but, on the contrary, that the sin with which they are charged is the misplacing it in point of time, by asserting that to be "past already," which was and is *still future*,—the resurrection of *those whom the Lord knoweth are His*, and which introduces to that *reign with Christ* by the prospect of which the apostle comforts Timothy. In that essay we have also argued fully the premillennial resurrection of "some to shame and everlasting contempt," (from Dan. xii. 2, in connection with the apostle's statement in the 20th verse,) in opposition to some Millenarians who overlook the evidence on this point. We do not, however, resume these discussions here, but refer those who feel particular interest in the question to the periodical named above.

John, in his description of those who are the subjects of the First Resurrection. They not only "lived," and were "blessed and holy," but he also informs us, "they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." By inquiring, then, to whom these privileges are assigned in other parts of the Divine Word, we shall derive farther confirmation of the views now maintained. Here it is proper to remember, that, although the affairs of this world are represented (Heb. i. 14) as being put by God under the ministration of angels, yet "unto the angels hath He *not* put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."^{*} Heb. ii. 5. To His apostles the Saviour said, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and *sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" Luke xxii. 28—30. When will this gracious reward be received, if not during the Millennium? Or will the distinction of the tribes of Israel be maintained in the future state? This promise of royal authority, thus made by the Saviour to His apostles, is extended by them to other saints as their future reward: "I endure all things for the elect's sake," says Paul, "that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.*" 2 Tim. ii. 10—12. And again, anticipating the glorious privilege for himself

* The Examiner in the Instructor (p. 528,) quotes Paul's statement (Heb. vi. 5,) of the condition of those who should fall away after having "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," in order to show that the apostle "speaks of that age *to come* as already commenced, and as *already come*." But if at that time it had *already* come, how could the apostle speak of it as still future, as being still "*the world to come*"? There is an obvious distinction between the age itself, and the "powers" which shall be enjoyed by those who are "accounted worthy" to obtain it. And, while the age itself was yet distant, "Spiritual gifts" were extensively enjoyed, which may perhaps be regarded as a foretaste of the superior "powers" to be still more generally enjoyed in "*the world to come*." The apostle, in the passage quoted above, expressly tells us that the world to come is *not* put in subjection to the angels, but this cannot apply to the present age: "Are they not all ministering spirits," he asks in the same epistle, "sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14.

and all believers, the apostle exclaims, “Henceforth there is laid up for me *a crown of righteousness*, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at THAT DAY,* and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” 2 Tim. iv. 8.

The same apostle, in reproving the church at Corinth for going to law before the unjust, and not deciding their own matters, asks, “Do ye not know that *the saints shall judge the world?*”—to judge being used in the sense of governing. He adds, “Know ye not that we shall *judge angels?*” 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. The apostle John, contemplating the honour reserved for believers, ascribes glory “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and *hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.*” Rev. i. 5, 6. And it was the song of the heavenly choristers who bow before the Lamb, on His opening the sealed book of Prophecy, “Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of

* Here the apostle, as if to mark that this crown is to be received at “the times of the Restitution of all things,” adopts the very form of expression so often used by the prophets in reference to that period—“at that day,” when no particular day has been mentioned. In a preceding chapter also he uses the same expression as applied to the period of Christ’s return: “For I know,” says he, “whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against *that day.*” 2 Tim. i. 12. In that chapter too he prays for Onesiphorus, whose bounty he had experienced, and whose countenance he had received, while in bonds for the name of Jesus—In the spirit of love and of gratitude, the apostle prays, “the Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in *that day.*” 2 Tim. i. 18. To the same period the apostle Peter refers, and probably more particularly to the First Resurrection, when he says, “we have also a more sure word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, *until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.*” 2 Pet. i. 19. This can be no allusion to the period of their conversion, as the epistle is only addressed to those who had already “obtained like precious faith” with him. But it is worthy of remark, how judiciously and appropriately these allusions to “that day” are made. Although, when understood, they have a pleasing effect; to many, such allusions would have been incomprehensible. But this, Paul must have known, could not be the case with him who “from a child had known the holy scriptures” of the Old Testament; (2 Tim. iii. 15,) and Peter addressed those who *gave heed* to that “sure word of Prophecy,” from which his allusion was derived.

every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and *hast made us unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS, and we shall reign ON THE EARTH.*" Rev. v. 9, 10. This high privilege is bestowed upon all who maintain their allegiance and fidelity; "To him *that overcometh*," says our blessed Lord, "will I grant *to sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." Rev. iii. 21. That this honour is conferred upon them to be really exercised, is evident; "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces; even as I received of my Father." Rev. ii. 26, 27. This serves to illustrate the character of the armies of heaven who follow the Saviour when He comes for the destruction of the Antichristian nations. They are said (Rev. xix. 14,) to be "clothed in fine linen, clean and white;" and this (in verse 8) is said to be "the righteousness of *saints*." And again, speaking of those kings who fight against the Lamb, it is stated, "these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they *that are WITH him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*" Rev. xvii. 14. To him that overcometh "will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." This is assigned by the Psalmist as matter of especial praise to God: "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds; let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a sharp two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written; *This honour is to all His saints. Praise ye the Lord.*" Ps. cxlix. 5—9.

We cannot, in this state, form any adequate conception of the honour reserved for those "who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from amongst the dead," as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. ii. 9. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when *He shall appear* we shall be like Him, for we shall

see Him as He is." 1 John iii. 2. But as the honour of being *kings and priests*, in whatever it may consist, is the privilege of the redeemed, when we find these applied by the apostle John to those who live and reign with Christ we are surely entitled to believe, in accordance with the other Scriptures, that he refers to the literal resurrection of the just at the coming of the Lord.

SECTION XXI.

PERIOD OF THE ERECTION OF CHRIST'S GLORIOUS KINGDOM.

THE Scriptural nature of the doctrine of Christ's personal reign on earth will be still more clearly seen on examination of what is farther revealed concerning the time at which His Kingdom shall be established. The angelic messenger sent to announce to the blessed Virgin the conception of Jesus, declared, in unequivocal language, the erection of His Kingdom, and his possession of the throne of David: "And the Lord God shall give unto Him the *throne of his father David*, and He shall *reign over the house of Jacob for ever*, and of his Kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 31—33. Christ has not yet taken possession of the throne of his father David, but as certainly as the predictions which announced his descent from him have been literally fulfilled, so surely may we rely on the fulfilment in due time of this and the numerous other prophecies of the future possession of his kingdom. The truth and necessity of the resurrection of Christ, the apostle Peter strongly argued from the promises of God to give unto Him the throne of Israel. He distinctly affirms, in language the meaning of which it would be absurd to attempt to pervert, that King David "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would *raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.*" Acts ii. 30, 31. In the day of his humiliation, Jesus avouched his title to allegiance, although he came not then to obtain the crown. The throne of his father David yet remains unoccupied, and the house of Jacob still refuse him fealty. As King, however, he rode into Jerusalem, amid the hosannahs

of his poorest subjects, although he then refused the exercise of regal power. He laid claim to the throne, but he entered not into immediate possession. Thus in Pilate's hall of judgment, while he avowed himself King, (John xviii. 39,) he declared that His Kingdom "is not of this world"—that it *is not* "now" *from hence*,—*vvv*, "*at the present time*" it is not—leaving no room for doubt that at a future period it would be so. The time for establishing His visible kingdom had not yet arrived. "The times of the Gentiles" must first be fulfilled, during which His kingdom was to be only spiritual. But when their period of probation shall terminate, then shall He return "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," for the establishment of that kingdom of glory which shall be both external and spiritual, and of which all the prophets have witnessed. Thus it is that the Saviour sometimes speaks of a kingdom already existing, and at other times of one yet to come.*

By the parable, Luke xix. 12, He intimates that at his ascension He should only go to receive the kingdom, thus directing the faith of his disciples to the time of his Return

* It may be observed, that in one instance, no sooner had the Saviour directed the attention of the unbelieving *Pharisees* to the spiritual kingdom, than he turns to the *disciples* and addresses *them* on His coming in glory: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered *them*, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there: for behold, the kingdom of God is within you, ['among you,'—marg.] And he said unto the *disciples*, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see *one of the days* of the Son of Man, and *ye* shall *not* see it. And they shall say to you, see here! or see there! go not after them nor follow them, For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his Day." He adds, "But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation," or "nation" of the Jews. Luke xvii. 20—25. This is the coming He afterwards announced, and the signs of which he foretold, (Mat. xxiv.) the very same language being here employed, as also in much of the remainder of the chapter. Consistency has therefore induced some commentators to place this also at the destruction of Jerusalem, although the Saviour here declares, that the day of which he is speaking, is one which the disciples should *desire to see*. They had, however, no desire to see the holy city, (with which their most sacred feelings were associated,) laid in ashes, but they did *earnestly* "desire to see" the Son of Man come in His glory to "restore again the Kingdom to Israel."

when he shall have "obtained the kingdom He went to receive." He accordingly taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom *come*," as of an event still future. It is not merely that the spiritual kingdom already established may be *extended*, and all nations be brought into it, but the erection of one which had not yet existed.—"Thy kingdom come" clearly implies its not having been hitherto erected, as to pray for the *coming* of what was already come would involve an inconsistency. And that this kingdom they are taught to desire is to be in this world, is evident from the succeeding clause of the sentence, "Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven." The answer to this our prayer, so often repeated without due consideration of its full import, has not yet been received, nor will be till the Millennium.

In the assembly at Jerusalem, when there had been much disputing about the necessity of circumcising believing Gentiles, Peter and Paul and Barnabas attested the power of the grace of God among them as well as among the Jews; and the apostle James proved that this Gentile dispensation was predicted by the prophets, as to precede the restoration of the kingdom to Israel: "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me; Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, AFTER THIS *I will Return*, and will build again the tabernacle of David, *which is fallen down*, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and *I will set it up*: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things." Acts xv. 13—17. Before the restoration of Israel, and the re-occupation of David's throne which has so long been vacant, God has first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name; after which *He will return*. As our Lord himself said to the Jews, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." John x. 16. And after He shall have taken out of the Gentiles a people for His name, He "will return, and build again the tabernacle of David," which was then fallen down, and which must continue so till the times of the

Gentiles be fulfilled. The delightful promise the apostle quotes (although not literally,) from the prophet Amos, by whom it is announced to be fulfilled in "that day," the form of expression so often used by the Old Testament prophets in reference to the Millennium; "*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen*, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old....and *I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel*, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, *and they shall NO MORE be pulled up out of their land*, which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Amos ix. 11—15. Here, then, we find that the tabernacle of David is to be raised at the period of Israel's final restoration; and the apostle James informs us that this will take place at our Lord's "Return;" thus, not only connecting the re-erection of the throne of David with the coming of Christ, but intimating the connection of both with the existence of the Kingdom during the Millennium, when "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." Luke i. 32, 33.

The establishment of the Millennial kingdom, and the coming of the Son of man at that period, are also declared in the prophecies of Daniel. The seventh chapter contains, as we have seen in speaking of the destruction of Antichrist, a prediction of four great empires which should exist from the beginning of the captivity till the Millennium. From three of these, viz. the Babylonish, the Persian, and the Grecian, the extensive dominion has long since passed away; and as it was predicted of the fourth or Roman empire, that "the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise," so was it divided into ten kingdoms, forming the present European dynasties, in which state it has continued many centuries. The rise of Antichrist was predicted, as a little horn growing up among these horns or kingdoms; on account of whose blasphemies, thrones of judgment for his destruction are represented as being at length set by the Ancient of Days. At this time, the prophet says, "I saw, in the night visions, and behold one like *the Son of man*

came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 7—14. This Kingdom, then, is to be received only at the destruction of Antichrist and the other horns or kingdoms which arose out of the Roman empire. It is not merely the extension, at that time, of the spiritual kingdom at present in existence. But when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven, the kingdom spoken of is only then to be "GIVEN to Him." It is then, "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." ver. 18. And as the four preceding monarchies have had their dominion upon the earth, so it is added, in the 27th verse, "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, UNDER the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Can there be a doubt that this Coming with the clouds of heaven, so magnificently described, is the same with that predicted by our Lord Himself, (Luke xxi. 17,) when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled? As if indeed to enable us to identify the Saviour's allusion to this prediction, the promise of His return is recorded in language strikingly similar, if indeed it be not a direct quotation. And as the prophet saw Him receive "dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom;" so the Saviour, directing our attention to the signs of His coming, says, "when ye see these things come to pass, Know ye that THE KINGDOM OF GOD is nigh at hand." Luke xxi. 31. The time, also, at which the Saviour is seen, in the vision of the prophet, coming to receive His Kingdom, being just at the destruction of Antichrist, corresponds with the prediction of Paul, that this power is to be destroyed by the brightness, or glorious appearance, of Christ's coming. In the above passage from Luke, our Lord Himself connects, farther, the establishment of His kingdom with His return, and Paul also in one of his epistles does the same: Urging upon Timothy the duty of preaching the word, the apostle

charges him “before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at *His APPEARING and His KINGDOM,*” (2 Tim. iv. 1,)—thus making the establishment of His kingdom coincident with His appearing.

The establishment of the Kingdom is again predicted by Daniel. (ii. 31—43,) in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The same four monarchies seen by the prophet himself, as four great beasts, are here represented as the various parts of one great image, the Roman empire forming the legs and feet, and its subdivision into the present European kingdoms being now witnessed *in the ten toes.* The character of this kingdom in its divided state is also noticed : “ And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken ; and whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall *mingle themselves* with the seed of men, [by royal intermarriages,] but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mingled with clay.” The future erection of the Kingdom of Christ is then foretold : “ And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven *SET UP a Kingdom* which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom *shall not be left to other people*, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Dan. ii. 42, 44. Here again, it is to be observed, that the prediction is not of the *enlargement* of a kingdom already established, but the erection, or *setting up*, of one not before in existence. “ *In the days of these kings*” it shall be “ *set up*” by the God of heaven ; but the spiritual Kingdom of Christ was established *before these Kings* or Kingdoms were brought into existence. As in the vision of the four beasts, the prophet saw one like the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, so here it is said, “ Thou sawest, till that *a Stone was cut out without hands*, [a Scriptural expression for what is supernatural or divine, Col. ii. 11,] which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces ; then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and *the Stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*” ver. 34, 35. The power has now descend-

ed through all the parts of the image to the ten toes, in which divided state the Roman empire still continues to exist. But the whole shall be broken to pieces when the Stone shall smite the image, when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven for the establishment of that Kingdom which "shall not be left to other people."

When the seventh apocalyptic angel sounded, "There were," says the apostle, "great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world *are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ*; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xi. 15. The redeemed anticipate with delight the approach of this glorious era, and the downfall of Babylon is announced by the heavenly shout of triumph: "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia! *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*" Rev. xix. 6.

In a passage already cited, the Saviour not only promised His apostles a kingdom, but that they should also *eat and drink at His table*; "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table, *in my Kingdom*, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke xxii. 29, 30. It does not, however, comport with the ideas generally entertained of heaven, that sensible enjoyments should be there received. This promise of the Saviour given to the disciples at the institution of the sacrament of the Supper, is farther confirmed and illustrated, when He says, "*I will not drink of the fruit of the vine UNTIL the kingdom of God shall come.*" Luke xxii. 18. It is still more fully expressed by another evangelist: "Verily, I say unto you, I will drink *no more* of the fruit of the vine, until *that day* that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Mark xiv. 25. That it was really the fruit of the vine of which the Saviour spoke is evident. He had just given unto *the disciples* the cup containing wine, desiring them to drink of it, adding: "But I say unto you, I will not drink *henceforth* of *this* fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. xxvi. 29. That he referred to the Millennial kingdom appears still more obvious when we consider, that, although our Lord went to heaven long

before any of His apostles, yet he assured them that He should not drink of this fruit of the vine, “until *that day* when I drink it new *with you* in my Father’s kingdom.” And why should it be thought incredible that Christ will eat and drink in His Millennial kingdom? *After* his resurrection, He condescended to eat both fish and honey-comb, to convince his disciples that His presence was corporeal. Luke xxiv. 21—23. Again, having caused several of his disciples miraculously to obtain a draught of fishes, He invited them to dine, and partook of their bread and fish. John xxi. 11—14. Farther, it was *in the breaking of bread* He was made known to the disciples who journeyed to Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 13—35. And Peter mentioned to Cornelius and his company, the fact that *He did eat and drink with his disciples*, as evidence of the reality of His resurrection. Acts x. 41. What reason is there then to doubt the truth or the meaning of His promise to the disciples, that they shall sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel, and that they shall eat and drink with Him in the kingdom of God?

SECTION XXII.

NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH.

To prepare for that wonderful display of love when God shall condescend to dwell with men, the material world is destined to undergo a purification, which shall be effected when His enemies are destroyed at His coming. When, during that happy time, men shall yield cordial submission to their Saviour and sovereign Lord, the curse of barrenness, pronounced at first upon the earth for their disobedience, will be removed; and, as predicted by all the prophets, the greatest fertility will be enjoyed in its renovated state. The atmospheric heavens, the present region of clouds and storms, will then also be destroyed, and new heavens, more genial, will supply their place. “The prince of the power of the air” will then be dislodged and bound in the

bottomless pit, and universal happiness be diffused over the face of the globe—a happiness attendant on holiness, when “the Lord shall wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall he take away from off all the earth.” Is. xxv. 8. In the same psalm, which predicts that “when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory,” praise is ascribed to God on account of this change of the heavens and the earth; “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; *as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed*, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. *The children of thy servants shall continue*, and their seed shall be established before thee.” Ps. cii. 25—28. This change of the heavens is again predicted by the prophet Isaiah, as at the period when “the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies,” before the Millennium: “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, *and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll*; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from off the vine, and as a fallen fig from the fig-tree.” Is. xxxiv. 2, 4. Referring to the same period, the prophet Jeremiah says, “I beheld *the earth*, and lo! it was *without form and void*; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo! they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo! there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo! the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down *at the presence of the Lord*, by his fierce anger.” Jer. iv. 23—26. The change of the heavens is again predicted by Isaiah as to take place at the restoration of Israel: “For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden; and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.... Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: *for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke*, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for

ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." Is. li. 3—6. God's protection to Israel at this appalling time seems promised in the sixteenth verse : " And I have put my words in thy mouth, *and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand*, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."

But, great and important as these changes will be, the identity of the earth will remain the same, and its localities be still distinguishable. Jerusalem, it is repeatedly promised, shall occupy her former site, being builded " upon her own heap ;" and, in the following prediction of new heavens and a new earth, Israel is called to rejoice in that city during the Millennium : "*Behold I create new heavens and a new earth*, and the former shall not be remembered nor brought into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create ; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy ; and I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." Is. lxv. 17—19. To these Isaiah again refers in the conclusion of his prophecy in connection with the restoration and honour of Israel : And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For *as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make* shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Is. lxvi. 21, 22.

To this great change the apostle Peter directs the attention of Christians in his second general epistle. He stirs up the pure minds of believers, that they should "*be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets*" and apostles, and warns them of a heresy which should arise : "Knowing this first," says he, " that there shall come *in the last days* scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby *the world that THEN was* being overflowed with water perished. But the heavens and the earth which are *now*, by the same word are kept in store,

reserved unto fire against the day of judgment* and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. iii. 3—8. As at the flood, the heavens and the earth are here said to have *perished*, so are they destined to undergo *another change*, not by water but by fire, at the coming of the Lord. However scoffers may delude themselves with respect to the Saviour's Return, and although they may perceive no symptoms of its near approach, yet as surely as the threatenings upon the antediluvian world were executed in their destruction, as certainly will an ungodly and unbelieving world be overtaken

* In a former page, (190,) we have shown that "day" is, in Scripture, often applied to an indefinite period of time, and that it is thus used to designate the Millennial age. It may be proper also to notice, that "judgment" and "to judge" are not confined to the award of happiness or misery, but are frequently used in the sense of *government* and *to govern* during that dispensation. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and *shall execute judgment* and justice in the earth." Jer. xxiii. 5. "And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And *He shall judge* among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." Micah iv. 2, 3. And He shall not *judge* after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." Is. xi. 3, 4. "Then *judgment* shall dwell in the wilderness....and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation." Is. xxxii. 16—18. "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation; for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my *judgment* to rest *for a light of the people.*" Is. li. 4. So also when the Psalmist celebrates the "marvellous things" to be performed by the Lord when He "hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel," he calls on all the earth to "be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth," Ps. xciii. 1—9. This "judgment" or government is also given to the saints during the Millennium, which may therefore with perfect propriety be called "the day of judgment:" "And I saw thrones," says the apostle John, "and they sat upon them, and *judgment* was given unto them." Rev. xx. 4. In this sense it is used in Scripture, when we are informed of those who "judged Israel." And when that people demanded a *king*, their request was, "Make us a King to *judge* us." 1 Sam. viii. 4.—In all of these instances it is obvious that the word *judgment* is used in the sense of *rule* or *government*. Peter's use of the expression, "day of *judgment*," may therefore be regarded as another instance of allusion to the Millennial Day.

by the storm of divine indignation, “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” While men are deceiving themselves with appearances, and, in defiance of previous example, suppose that the promises and threatenings of God will not be fulfilled, they shall suddenly be overtaken by the storm of divine wrath. And as at the flood the heavens and the earth *perished*, by undergoing an important change, so are they now reserved for ANOTHER CHANGE, in preparation for the residence of the Redeemer and for the comfort of men. But while the apostle reminds believers of these glorious predictions of the holy prophets, he also foretells that little attention or credit will be given to them. The mercy and the long-suffering of God, that sinners may come to repentance, being imputed to his unwillingness or inability to accomplish these glorious promises, the world will be taken by surprise when the period of their fulfilment shall arrive.” “The day of the Lord,”* says the apostle, “will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be *dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Pet. iii. 10—13. It has been supposed that the apostle here predicts the utter destruction of the material world at the coming of Christ. But, strong as the language is, it does not warrant this opinion. The atmospheric heavens shall be *dissolved*, and their elements shall melt with fervent heat, yet the perishing of the

* Allusion is frequently made in the New Testament to *the day of the Lord*. The Old Testament prophets have also many predictions concerning the various periods of this eventful “day.” The following passages among others may be consulted. Is. ii. 12. xiii. 6, 9. xxxiv. 8. Jer. xlvi. 10. Ezek. xxx. 2, 3. Joel i. 15. ii. 1. iii. 14. Obad. verses 15, 17. Zeph. i. 7, 14. ii. 2, 3. Zech. xiv. 1.

earth in this instance by fire is put in contrast with the destruction effected by the waters of the flood. This, while it overwhelmed the guilty inhabitants and destroyed their works, still left the substance of the earth the same, although much marred by the disruptions it occasioned. However great the changes thus made upon its surface, to that the effects of the flood were principally confined.

Still there is much difficulty—equally experienced by millenarian and antimillenarian commentators, in giving a view of this passage consistent with itself and other scriptures. The extent of the judgments and the nature of the dispensations predicted by the holy prophets, of which the apostle reminds them, deserve serious consideration: still, the “promise” of new heavens and a new earth, recorded by Isaiah, to which the apostle refers, is, as we have seen, to have its fulfilment at the Millennium,* when the Lord shall “create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.” But were the difficulty even greater in human estimation than it is, faith can confidently trust for the fulfilment of God’s promise thus explicitly given. Jehovah sometimes

* Dr. Hamilton’s confused ideas of the new heavens and new earth have been so ably exposed in the letter addressed to himself in “*Defence of the Students of Prophecy*,” as to render unnecessary any lengthened remarks. Still, we may remind him, that the term *new* is applied in the above prediction of Isaiah to the earth in its Millennial state. When, therefore, he asserts, (p. 278,) that the sacred writers “have told us, as distinctly as language can express it, that the future habitation of the redeemed is to be a *new*, that is, *another* heaven and another earth, with which the present earth and heaven have *no connection*, and of which they shall form *no part*,” he only affirms what he ought to prove. The Doctor believes in a coming Millennium, and even quotes part of the above passage from Isaiah to prove its nature. But has not the Lord, by the prophet, in it “told us, as distinctly as language can express it,” that then He will “create *new* heavens and a *new* earth?” And as the apostle expected these new heavens and earth of which he speaks, according to God’s “promise,” and as the only promise contained in the Old Testament Scriptures of new heavens and a new earth, is that by Isaiah, it must be to this that he alludes. Yet the Doctor himself will not maintain that this promise is to be fulfilled by the creation of “*another* heaven and *another* earth, with which the present earth and heaven have *no connection*, and of which they shall form *no part*. ” Nor will he assert that “the heavens” which “were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water” before the flood, had no connection with, and form no part of “the heavens and the earth which *are now*,” with which the apostle contrasts them.

manifests His glory by putting the faith of his chosen people to the test, in their reception of his promises. To evidence his own power, and to try the faith of the children of Israel, on their leaving Egypt, the Lord caused Moses lead them off the proper route, and to encamp by the sea. In this situation, while entangled by the wilderness, and seeming to have no choice left, but either to perish in the yawning deep or await a no less certain destruction by the hand of their infuriated pursuers, they cried to Heaven for help. But the Lord said unto Moses, “ Wherefore criest thou unto me? *Speak unto the children of Israel that they go FORWARD.*” This was indeed a trial of their faith. Speak unto them that they go *forward*, while the rolling billows seemed to threaten certain and immediate destruction! But, “ *by faith*, they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians essaying to do were drowned.” To the primitive disciples the injunction of our Saviour relative to their escape from Jerusalem must have appeared no less mysterious: “ And when *ye shall see Jerusalem COMPASSED with armies*, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. *Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out;* and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto, for these be the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” Luke xxi. 21, 22. To the disciples it must have appeared a singular advice, that they should make their escape *when* they saw Jerusalem *compassed* with armies, rather than at an earlier period. Without faith in the veracity and faithfulness of Him the display of whose omniscience they had often witnessed, and in whose wisdom and goodness they could fully confide, they might have questioned the meaning of the injunction, and refused to avail themselves of the promised deliverance. But the event not only justified the trust they reposed, but afforded a glorious display of the Saviour’s divinity. The unexpected, and as it appears unnecessary withdrawal of the Roman army, for a short time, afforded the disciples an opportunity of escaping to Pella. In like manner, the full import of the distinct promise of new heavens and a new earth, as recorded by Isaiah, and referred to by Peter, we may not be able yet to perceive, but that they form a blessed preparative, for the Millennial glory, we cannot doubt.

That this world will during that dispensation still be the abode of men in the flesh is expressly foretold. And although it will be a period of unprecedented holiness and happiness, neither sin nor death will be wholly excluded : “the child *shall die* an hundred years old, and *the sinner* being an hundred years *shall be accursed.*”

SECTION XXIII.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

OF the employments of the redeemed while reigning with Christ on earth, and of the nature of their intercourse with mortal men, the Scriptures afford us little information. Repeated allusions are, however, made to the place of their residence. Of this the apostle John was specially favoured with a glorious vision, the account of which is recorded Rev. xxi. xxii. As the New Jerusalem is to be on the earth, and under the new heavens, that part of the vision which relates to it is introduced to the apostle by a view of these : “And I saw,” says he, (Rev. xxi. 1.) “And I saw *a new heaven and a new earth*; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more [symbolical] sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, *coming down from God out of heaven prepared* as a bride adorned for her husband.” This celestial city is designed as the residence of Christ and the redeemed, and comes down out of heaven, where it is previously “prepared,” and where it is now “reserved” for this purpose. “And I heard,” continues the apostle, “a great voice out of heaven, saying, *Behold the tabernacle of God is WITH MEN, and He will DWELL WITH THEM, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be WITH them,* and be their God.” ver. 3. This we apprehend, is that Second city seen in vision by Ezekiel, in the Holy Oblation offered to the Lord, in the new division of the Holy Land. He calls it “*the Most Holy place,*” and more frequently “*THE CITY.*” There are many coincidences in the account given of it by John with that given by Ezekiel. Of the names of its gates the prophet says, “and the gates of *THE CITY* shall be *after the names of the tribes of Israel;*” and he particularizes the

respective situations of the different gates by name. (Ezek. xlviii. 31—34.) The New Jerusalem as seen by the apostle has also twelve gates, “and names written thereon, which are the *names of the twelve tribes* of the children of Israel.” (Rev. xxi. 12.) The arrangement of these gates is also precisely the same with that given by Ezekiel : “on the east, 3 gates ; on the north, 3 gates : on the south, 3 gates ; and on the west, 3 gates.” ver. 13. This City has an attendance enjoyed by no other ; for “they that serve the City shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel ;” and a portion of the Holy Oblation is allotted for their maintenance. Ezek. xlviii. 18, 19. Of the New River, to which we formerly referred, (p. 111,) Ezekiel says, “upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed ; it shall bring forth *new* fruit according to his *months*, because their waters they issued from the Sanctuary. And the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the *leaf* thereof for *medicine*.” Ezek. xlviij. 12. So John also narrates of the New Jerusalem, that “in the midst of the street of it, and on *either* side of the river was there the tree of life [not *one* tree merely, since it grew on ‘*either* side of the river,’ but trees of one species,] which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yeilded her fruit *every month*, and the *leaves* of the tree were for the *healing* of the nations.” Rev. xxii. 2. How striking is the coincidence!

That the apostle might have a full view of the wonderful City, there came unto him an angel who carried him away “in the spirit, to a great and high mountain, and showed” him “that great city the holy Jerusalem *descending out of heaven from God*, having the glory of God ; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal ; and *had a wall great and high*, and had twelve gates.” ver. 10—12. A similar coincidence exists in their different accounts of the *measurements* of the City they severally describe. In all the works we have seen which treat on this point a great discrepancy is indeed supposed to exist between the statement of the prophet and that of the apostle. But this mistake has arisen from an oversight of the fact, that while the one states the *circumference*, the other informs us of the *square* measurement. Ezekiel says, “It was, *round about*, eighteen thousand

measures" of the angel's reed, which was in length "six great cubits," of 22 inches each. Being a square, each "side" was "four thousand and five hundred measures" of the reed. Ezek. xlviii. 32. But John, in his measurements, does not specify its *length* or *breadth*, but having mentioned that it is *square*, he gives the measurement accordingly: "And the City lieth *four-square*, and the length is *as large* as the breadth. And he [the angel] measured *the City* with the reed *twelve thousand furlongs*. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal." Rev. xxi. 16, 17. It was not the length, or breadth, or height, which the angel measured. These indeed he declares to be "equal;" but the "twelve thousand furlongs," instead of being the dimensions of *each or any of its sides*, as is commonly supposed, are the measurement of "*the City*"—"four square." We consider this, therefore, as neither the length nor the breadth, but as the measurement of *the area* of the City; and reckoning by the Jewish furlong of $266\frac{2}{3}$ cubits, as stated by Maimonides, on extracting *the square* of the measurement of the circumference of THE CITY given by Ezekiel, we obtain a view by which the statements of the prophet and apostle are found to correspond very very nearly,—and which would probably correspond exactly if Maimonides' standard were perfectly accurate,—thus confirming the view of their identity. This glorious City shall be inhabited by the saints of God. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things, [marg.] and I will be his God, and he shall be my son," ver. 7; and all are excluded from the City whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. To this Tabernacle, as distinct from the Sanctuary, Ezekiel appears to refer in a preceding chapter: "My servant THE BELOVED shall be their Prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; (it shall be an everlasting covenant with them;) and will place them, and multiply them, and will set my *Sanctuary* in the midst of them for evermore. *My Tabernacle also shall be with them;* yea I will be their God and they shall be my people." Ezek. xxxvii. 25—27. To this City the apostle Peter appears also to refer as the "inheritance" of the saints "*reserved in heaven*" till the period when it shall be revealed: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively

hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, (*reserved in heaven* for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,) ready to be revealed in the last time, 1 Pet. i. 4. And it is the promise of the Saviour to him that overcometh, “I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.” Rev. iii. 12. Of this city it is said, “and the nations of them that are saved [from the destruction which shall overtake the ungodly at the coming of the Lord] shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it....and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.” Rev. xxi. 24—26.

“Behold the measure of the promise fill’d !
 See Salem built, the labour of a God !
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ;
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
 Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy,
 And endless her increase.”

Cowper's Task.

Much confusion has resulted from applying to the inhabitants of the new earth, the character of the citizens of the New Jerusalem which descends out of heaven unto it. The distinction is obvious. While in the new earth, Isaiah predicts there shall be both sin and death, the apostle John declares the exclusion of both from the Holy City. Again, from the account of the descent of the New Jerusalem being placed in John’s vision after that of the final resurrection and general judgment, it has been supposed by some to be the place of blessedness *after* the Millennium. But the order of insertion is of itself no criterion of the order of time. The apostle gives, in succession, different views; and when he has carried forward his narrative of one class of events returns to take up another, or to explain particular parts which would have occupied too much space in the narrative itself. The whole book is constructed on this principle; and thus (as respects the order of chapters,) long after the announcement of the kingdoms of this world having become the king-

dom of our Lord and of his Christ, we have again brought before us the existence and success of Antichrist. But, in all such cases, keys are given for the elucidation of the prophecy, and for determining the relative periods of the several parts. In the case before us, the New Jerusalem descends to the *new earth*, and this is connected with the Millennium by the prediction of the prophet Isaiah. Its relation to time and the things of time is farther evident from the fact, that “the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it:” it must therefore be *upon the earth* that they may have access unto it, and have a reference to this world while the relation subsists between kings and their subjects.*

SECTION XXIV.

FUTURE APOSTASY, GENERAL RESURRECTION, AND FINAL JUDGMENT.

GLORIOUS and holy as the Millennial age will be, it is to be succeeded by a short space during which Satan, being loosed again from his confinement, once more shall succeed in seducing men from the allegiance they owe to their Divine King: “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle;

* Mr. Mason, in his volume on the Gentiles’ Fulness, &c. (pp. 169 and 188,) applies this vision of the New Jerusalem to “the blessedness of the righteous” after the general resurrection, “the heavenly glory and blessedness of the saints.” But we observe with pleasure, that, since the publication of that work, he has obtained more correct views on this subject. In a more recent publication, (Sermon on the Seventh Vial,) on the words, “It is done,” Rev. xxi. 6, he says, “standing as they do in connexion with God’s work of making all things new, [they] must relate to the blessed alterations which He will establish *on the earth, after the judgments predicted in THE VIALS are finished.*” p. 4.

Dr. Wardlaw also quotes the 3d verse as applicable to Millennial times, and gives it as one of the “passages of which the application is hardly questioned.” p. 478.

the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the Beloved City," the New Jerusalem apparently. Rev. xx. 7—9. We have already shown, (p. 113,) that, during the Millennium, the nations are required to go up to Jerusalem and worship the Lord. It has been supposed that neglect of this privilege and breach of the law may be the commencement of that defection and ultimate apostasy, which terminates in their utter overthrow in the impious attempt upon the camp of the saints and the Beloved City. This opinion has been founded on what is said of the punishment of those who refuse to go up to worship at Jerusalem, and the pointed reference to Egypt by name: "And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not, that have [ordinarily] no rain; there shall be *the plague* wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zech: xiv. 17—19. Besides the ordinary blessings of Providence, the special communications of the Holy Spirit may be vouchsafed for compliance with the divine law, while they may be withheld from those nations which undervalue the privilege and neglect compliance with the injunction; and when Satan is again loosed from his prison, how soon may that Wicked Spirit succeed in stirring up men to the most impious enterprise! In this he will have a short-lived triumph in the delusion of our race, whose holiness and happiness during the Millennium shall have increased the misery of his confinement. That he should succeed in seducing them from their allegiance to the Divine Redeemer and Glorious King, after such a display of His love and condescension, affords melancholy proof not only of the power of the Evil One, but also of the mighty malice by which he is actuated. But when we reflect on the guilt and audacity which first hurled him from glory, his subsequent hatred to God, and the enmity and cunning which have since characterized his dealings with our race, our wonder is diminished at the success of his designs in deluding guilty men and inducing

them to act the infatuated part here ascribed unto them. The guilt of their apostasy is not greatly more atrocious than was that of the fall of holy Adam. It is not more mysterious than was the fall of holy angels. Nor will they have more reason to triumph in the result of their daringness. Whatever be its origin, and however it may be conducted, the attempt receives an immediate and signal punishment: "and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them, and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."* Rev. xx. 10.

The overthrow of this apostasy is followed by the general resurrection. All who have died during the Millennium, and the rest of the dead who had previously died, and who "lived not again until the thousand years were finished," will then be raised to eternal glory or unending misery. We may remark, however, that there is not the slightest intimation of Christ's *coming* at this time, as some would insinuate. His *return* at the beginning of the Millennium is announced in the 19th chapter, his reign with his saints during that happy time, at the beginning of the 20th, and here at the close of that chapter is his work of final judgment. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it," continues the apostle, "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, *small and great*, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to

* Mr. Mason, the Examinator in the Instructor, and Dr. Hamilton, all consider the fact of such an apostasy taking place a strong objection to the Doctrine of Christ's personal reign on earth. It is by the rejection of mysteries that some have set aside the most valuable doctrines of revelation. On this very ground many disbelieve both the existence and the agency of Satan altogether. But we trust that our authors have not so learned Christ as to deny any of His plainly revealed truths, however mysterious.

their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the Second Death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." ver. 11—15. There is no exception of any *then in their graves* from this resurrection. The receptacles of death yield all their tenants to receive their doom—those whose names are found in the book of life being raised to glory, and the wicked to the condemnation of the second death, being cast into the lake of fire.*

This, then, terminates what the Scriptures reveal concerning our relation to the earth. In our inquiries we can-

* Dr. Hamilton labours to prove from this passage, that, as the language is of a general nature, there cannot have been a resurrection at the commencement of the thousand years. Dr. Wardlaw also refers to it (p. 510,) in proof of a *simultaneous* "resurrection of *all the dead* without distinction." True, it is a "resurrection of *all THE DEAD*;" but it is only "*the dead*, small and great," who are now raised and judged, which does not include those who *lived* in the First Resurrection a thousand years before. The language therefore is general *only of the dead*, among whom those already raised to life will not be found. But Dr. H. is not content with including in this last resurrection those whom the apostle had already seen live and reign with Christ, but also makes it embrace all who have preceded them in the resurrection of life. No matter that we are informed by the evangelist that many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after Christ's resurrection, the Doctor (p. 207,) discovers from the language of the apostle that "it seems inevitably to follow that this is the resurrection of *the whole human race*; that till then there will be no resurrection of the dead, but then *the whole collective body of mankind WITHOUT ONE EXCEPTION shall be raised from the dead.*" This sentiment is reiterated in the same page where he says, "we are here assured that not only all the dead shall then stand before God, and be judged according to their works; but that they shall be judged '*every man according to their works.*'" From this he concludes, that, if there be a resurrection prior to the Millennium, those who share in it "are neither judged at all nor receive according to their works." Here, again, the Doctor confounds the obvious distinction between those who have previously been raised, and those who shall be dead at this general resurrection. It is only *every man of the dead*, small and great, who shall then be judged, among whom will not be found any who had been *raised* before. If all who are not raised in this resurrection "are neither judged at all nor receive according to their works," then it follows that not only those who share in the First Resurrection, and the "many" who were raised after Christ's resurrection, but also that Elijah who was carried to heaven amid the horsemen and chariots of the Lord, and Enoch who "was not, for God took him," cannot have received according to their works. Such is the legitimate conclusion from the principle assumed.

not go beyond this, for "then cometh the end, when" Christ "shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when he saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is expected which did put all things under Him: And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."*

1 Cor. xv. 24—28. In what this delivering up of the kingdom consists, we pretend not to know. This is all the information God has seen meet to communicate on the subject, and while it is our duty to know what God has revealed, we must not presume to be wise above what is written. In whatever it consists, the believer's happiness can never be diminished. The love of Jehovah is eternal, and His saints are made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. But this kingdom is limited to the duration of mortality, and therefore to the present state, as Christ reigns only until he

* Some have, however, denied that the Millennial dispensation can be meant in the predictions of Christ's kingdom, because it is said to be "for ever," while John represents the continuance of the Millennial Reign as to be for 1000 years. But this, while it affords ground to conclude that its existence will not be limited to a thousand literal years, is no argument against its identity with the Millennial kingdom predicted by the prophets, who also frequently speak of its duration as *forever*. At Israel's restoration, "they shall dwell," saith the Lord, "in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children, *for ever*, and my servant THE BELOVED shall be their Prince *for ever*." Ezek. xxxvii. 25. "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation. And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth *even for ever*. Mic. iv. 7. Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land *for ever*." Is. lx. 21. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the city [Jerusalem] shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner....It shall not be plucked up nor thrown down any more *for ever*." Jer. xxxi. 38—40. "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom *for ever, even for ever and ever*." Dan. vii. 18. Yet no one will venture to deny that these passages, one and all, refer to the duration of that Millennial kingdom which John represents as continuing for 1000 years.

hath put *death* the last enemy under His feet, when He shall deliver up the kingdom. And the establishment of the kingdom being only “nigh at hand,” as we have seen, when the indications of Christ’s return are seen—its whole term of existence must be subsequent to His coming.

SECTION XXV.

THE SUBMISSION DUE TO REVEALED TRUTH, WITH REMARKS ON OBJECTIONS TO THESE DOCTRINES.

HAVING produced from the prophets so much evidence for Christ’s premillennial advent and subsequent reign on earth —having shown the literal fulfilment of prophecies already accomplished—having adverted to the views of Jewish believers, sanctioned by Christ himself—having proved His return to be at the restoration of Israel; at the times of Refreshing and Restitution; and at the destruction of Antichrist,—and having shown these to be in perfect harmony with the various predictions concerning concomitant events,—it may now be asked if there be any room to doubt the great truth in which all these predictions centre—the return of Christ and His future residence on earth, personally to assume the reins of government? Or can it still be believed, that, with all these distinct prophecies before us, the Redeemer’s only residence among men should be a pilgrimage of sorrow and suffering, and that,—instead of *reigning* in Jerusalem,—a few years of ignominy and pain should terminate His immediate relation to our earth? When thoroughly purified and rendered fit for the residence of the Son of God, shall it not rather be again honoured with the presence of Him who once in suffering trod its surface, and for whom it scarcely afforded shelter,—when as King He shall reign in Zion, and receive the grateful homage of all the kings and princes of the earth?—and that His faithful followers, who, amidst the wickedness with which they were surrounded, have in all ages witnessed for His cause, shall then also be made partakers of His glorious reign, being made kings and priests to God, while harmony shall universally prevail among men?—That then, too, shall the Inferior Animals

participate of the temporal blessings flowing from Emmanuel's blood, and the ferocity being removed by which many of them are now characterized, and by which they are rendered formidable to man and destructive of each other, they shall range in peacefulness together, and in happy subserviency to man their Lord?—That then the earth itself which has so long withheld her fertility, yielding her fruits only by the sweat of man's brow, being redeemed also from the bondage of corruption under which it groans, shall spontaneously yield those fruits which are necessary for food, or which contribute to the comfort of human life?

And surely, if we are among the number of those who have already received the "Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession;" (Eph. i. 14,) and if we be rightly exercised, instead of being unwilling to receive this glorious Lord with all the attendant blessings, His coming ought to be an object of delightful contemplation, and every symptom of its near approach should be hailed with thanksgiving. So it was formerly viewed by His disciples and apostles, who "desired to see" this glorious "day of the Son of man." To it their hopes were continually directed, and its coming and glory are made the great motive to duty by the inspired penmen, and is ever urged upon believers as the period when they shall obtain ample recompence for whatever wrongs they sustain—receive full consolation for any sufferings they are called to endure—and enjoy a high reward for all their services of love to the Redeemer. Although the Saviour's return was not to take place for so long a period after the apostolic age, yet the admonitions to the primitive churches are so couched as to convey instruction equally adapted for them and for us "on whom the ends of the world are come." A spirit of watchfulness and waiting was inculcated on them which ought equally to have characterized the Church in all subsequent ages. A salutary uncertainty was left as to the period of Christ's return; and even when the apostle Paul corrected the mistake of the Thessalonian church when they expected His coming *instantly* to take place, he still left them in ignorance of the length of time which should previously elapse. Although he informed them that Antichrist must first be revealed, and that his destruction should be effected by the

glorious appearance of Christ's coming, they could still form no idea of the duration of this wicked power. Prophetic dates were indeed given to the Church, but it was also predicted that they should not be understood till about the period of their accomplishment, "for the words are closed up and *sealed* till the time of the end." Dan. xii. 12. It is remarkable, however, that the nearer the church arrived to the time of the fulfilment of these predictions, the more completely did the hope and desire of His coming die away.*

* In the present day there are many who even apply the predictions of *the coming of Christ*, and of *the day of the Lord*, to the time of death. This, Dr. Hamilton (p. 254,) endeavours to justify. Quoting 1 Thess. v. 1—4, and with it citing 2 Pet. iii. 4, 10, 12, (for what purpose we cannot perceive, unless he means also to apply *the passing away of the heavens* to the day of death!) he applies them to the decease of "every individual in that and in every succeeding age." The ground on which he makes this application may be made equally applicable to almost every passage predicting the glorious coming of Christ. The apostle says, "But YE, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should *overtake YOU as a thief*," and from the personal nature of this and other addresses, the Doctor infers that "*the day of the Lord*" is the day of death. But before adopting such a principle of interpretation, let us observe the consequences of its application. The great apostle of the Gentiles, addressing the church at Corinth concerning the observance of the Lord's Supper, reminds them that Jesus said to his disciples, "*This do YE, as oft as YE drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as YE eat this bread and drink this cup, YE do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME.*" 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. From this would Dr. H. infer that any of *the twelve*, or any *individual* of the Corinthian church living when the apostle wrote, and whom he immediately addressed, should continue to show forth the Saviour's death *until His Return*? Or would he deny that the "*YE*" applied to the church in all ages "*till He come*"? Again, was it not the literal advent of Christ to which the same apostle referred when he blessed the Lord that the believing Thessalonians had "*turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to WAIT for His Son FROM HEAVEN*"? 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. And, to refer to the passage cited by the Doctor, is it not the day of the literal coming of Christ of which the apostle Peter speaks when he exhorts those to whom he wrote to be "*LOOKING FOR, and HASTING UNTO, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved*"? 2 Pet. iii. 12. So Paul, again speaking of the resurrection and glorification of the saints at Christ's coming, says, "*The dead in Christ shall rise first, then WE which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.*" 1 Thess. iv. 17, and 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Is there any passage which speaks of the coming of Christ that contains a more direct or personal address than these? Yet they evidently refer to the Saviour's Personal Return.

And it is also remarkable, that with the decay of the church's belief in this glorious doctrine, did her teachers cease to inculcate His coming as a motive to duty; till at length what the apostles evidently regarded as the most powerful persuasive to holiness, and the most consolatory doctrine to the suffering and bereaved, seemed to have wholly lost its efficacy, and was seldom referred to with this design,—the hopes of believers in such cases, being generally directed to the day of their death.

The cause of this departure from apostolic example may, perhaps, on examination, be found in the distance at which systematic theology has latterly placed the Coming of the Lord. The apostles uniformly urged it upon the Church as an event so sudden and unexpected, that believers were never allowed to lose sight of it as what might possibly be realized in their own day. Thus, when the apostle would remove the premature apprehensions of the church at Thessalonica, he does not say, *they had no reason for perturbation*, as many centuries must elapse before the coming of Christ. He beseeches *them*, (2 Thess. ii. 2,) that *they "be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled."* But by placing our Lord's return after the Millennium, we render it certain to every one that he must long before have been gathered to his fathers—since 1000 years must assuredly intervene.

It is a common objection to the doctrine of Christ's personal reign on earth that it is *unnecessary*, since He can as easily accomplish all His purposes while in heaven. Far be it from us to say a single word to detract from the omnipotence of Jesus. But our present inquiry is not what He *could* have done, but what he designs to do. The only means by which a knowledge of this can be obtained is by an examination of the revelation of His will. This we have shown has left no room for speculation on the necessity or expediency of His presence. His word is explicit, and we are not at liberty to doubt the wisdom of His purposes. It is true, that, in the Scriptures of truth, there are many things perplexing and astounding to human reason. The finite mind can ill comprehend the deep things of God. It is but little of His ways that we can know. But the doctrine here maintained is perfectly comprehensible, as well as glorifying to the Saviour. The objection of Christ's per-

sonal reign being unnecessary, can therefore have no weight against an appeal to the law and to the testimony. Our being unable to see *the necessity* for any doctrine, or even its being in opposition to our ideas of the nature and fitness of things, cannot be urged against what God has revealed. The very character of true faith is to believe. Nothing could have been more opposed to carnal reason than the command given to Abraham when he dwelt at Beersheba, to go up to a certain mount in the land of Moriah, and there to offer up Isaac for a burnt-offering. Isaac was Abraham's son, his only and beloved son, and the heir of promise. The father might therefore have reasoned against such a command not merely as unnecessary but as unnatural, and altogether incompatible with the fulfilment of the promise of God, that in Isaac should his seed be called. But Abraham "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead," conferred not with flesh and blood, but "stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." For this he received the honourable appellation of "the Father of the faithful." But if faith thus obey God's command, even when against reason, is there no ground to question the genuineness of that which would set itself against the plainest testimony, because we perceive not the *necessity* of what God has promised?

But not only is this doctrine opposed as unnecessary: it is also decried as *degrading*.^{*} This objection can have little weight when brought to bear against *the reign* of Him whose love for our fallen race brought Him from the mansions of heavenly bliss under very different circumstances, being subjected to the insults of men, and under the hiding of His Father's countenance; "who being in the form of

* It is not a little surprising, that, in the very page in which Mr. Mason reprobates this doctrine as one that would bring Christ "from His glory above to an *ignominious* dwelling among men," he confesses of the Old Testament predictions and promises that "many expressions are found in them *so sublime and glorious*, as constrain us to apply them in their highest sense to the heavenly state." (Gentiles' Fulness, p. 195.) But, instead of thus misapplying the predictions concerning the Millennium, we ought rather to be constrained to believe that they truly refer to a period when the tabernacle of God shall dwell with men, and "when the Lord shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."

God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore*, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things *in heaven*, and things *in earth*, and things under the earth." "But now we see *not yet* all things put under Him." Phil. ii. 6—10. Heb. ii. 8. His sufferings were endured only for the glory that should follow—an increase of which will result from His personal reign on earth. It is generally esteemed an enhancement of the honour to which an individual attains that he is honoured in the very place where formerly he was despised. To this principle of our nature the Scriptures make frequent appeal. Speaking of the exaltation of Israel, the Lord says, "I will get them praise and fame in every land *where they were put to shame*." Zeph. iii. 19. "And it shall come to pass that in *the place where* it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." Hos. i. 19. If this be an honour to God's ancient people, may it not be also considered a greater degree of exaltation to the Saviour that the scene of His suffering should be that of His triumph?—that the same earth should behold the exaltation of Him of whose living agonies and accursed death it is said in figure to have been an unwilling witness? Is there any degradation in his having exchanged the crown of thorns for one of glory?—that instead of the reed of insult He should there wield the sceptre of universal sovereignty?—that where He was hailed King in derision, He should be acknowledged the sole and rightful Lord? To this very honour there seems a special reference in the following passage; "Behold my servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and be extolled, and be very high. *As many were astonished at thee,* (his visage was *so marred more than any man*, and his form more than the sons of men,) **SO** shall he sprinkle many nations; *the kings shall shut their mouths at him.*" Is. lii. 13—15. There is another beautiful allusion by the same prophet to the relation between his humiliation and exaltation: "By

His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear *their iniquities*, THEREFORE will I divide Him *a portion with the great*, and he shall divide *the spoil with the strong*, BECAUSE He hath *poured out His soul unto death.*" Is. liii. 11, 12. Instead, therefore, of being degrading, the doctrine of Christ's triumph being enjoyed where His sufferings were endured, is not only clearly revealed, but is in full accordance with the dictates of reason, as enhancing his glory.

Some, willing to admit the strength of Scriptural evidence produced, may, however, be ready to suppose the Coming of Christ and the commencement of the Millennium still at a great distance, as few of the nations of the earth have yet been converted, and past experience does not warrant the hope of the Gospel's being speedily received by them, while those by whom it has been enjoyed, are rapidly retrograding. Were there any promise that his blessed truth should be universally accepted before the coming of the Lord, human probability must have given place to the assurance of faith—the power and the faithfulness of God being received as sufficient pledge for the certainty of the fulfilment of His promise. It would doubtless have been a pleasing prospect for Christian philanthropy, that so glorious a transformation should be so soon effected by the mild persuasive of the love of Christ. We are bound indeed to thank God for what success He has been pleased to bestow on Missionary operations,—the present extent and anticipated increase of which must afford the purest delight to all rightly exercised Christians. They rejoice in their success for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, feeling themselves under the highest obligations to promote their interests. But there is reason to fear that, in our ardour for the work, too sanguine expectations have been entertained of the result. The Millennium, it is supposed by many, will be the gracious result of the mere preaching of the gospel, and the present aspect of the world has rendered some doubtful if the commencement of that happy era can be near at hand. But the Scriptures do not represent the nations as having generally received the gospel at the period of Christ's return, nor is this the expectation of those who are now "looking for that blessed hope

and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus ii. 13. "And this *gospel* of The Kingdom," our Lord himself said, as we have already noticed, "*shall be PREACHED* in all the world, *for a witness* unto all nations, and THEN shall the end come"—the end of the age, when Christ shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven. Mat. xxiv. 3, 14. This work of *preaching* the gospel, or good news, of the coming kingdom, is in progress, and when its invitations shall have been addressed to all nations, the kingdom itself shall be established. From most countries, to the praise of divine grace, a few have been already gathered to the blessed Redeemer. Some have, however, resisted every attempt to make known its salutary doctrines among them, or to introduce this gracious witness. But the Spirit will not always strive with men, and those who despise and neglect the proffered mercy shall endure the weight of divine wrath. When the Jews had filled up the measure of their iniquity by the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, He sent and destroyed those wicked men and burnt up their city, and let out His spiritual vineyard to other husbandmen. The gospel was then entrusted to certain nations of the Gentiles, with the assurance that if they continued not in the goodness of God, they also should be cut off; (Rom. xi. 22.) for, "after a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Mat. xxv. 19. Instead, however, of profiting by the warning of God and the fate of Israel, these nations have perverted His gospel, thus heaping up wrath unto themselves against the day of wrath. God, foreseeing their awful abuse and perversion of His grace, determined that they should be cut off; and in order that this warning might have due effect, He ordained that the gospel, which denounced their sin and foretold its punishment, should first be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations. In the apocalyptic vision, therefore, immediately before the downfall of mystic Babylon, the apostle saw an angel commissioned to preach unto all nations, calling them to "fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgments is come." Rev. xiv. 6, 7. And the redeemed who stand on the sea of glass "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true

are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou only art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." Rev. xv. 3, 4. Thus will the righteous indignation of God against transgressors be vindicated in the eyes of men. And while other nations are being put in possession of the gospel *as a witness*, those which have so long been entrusted with God's word and ordinances are fast ripening for judgment. Instead, then, of the present state of the world indicating the coming of the Lord to be at a great distance, Prophecy and the external aspects of the nations seem alike to intimate His near approach.*

There is one other objection, which, though generally regarded as bearing against the doctrine of Christ's premillennial advent, does in reality confirm it. If Christ's personal reign on earth were a Scriptural doctrine, it is supposed that it could not have remained unknown to the Church or untaught by her ministers. It is indeed surpris-

* In repelling Objections urged against this doctrine, we feel imperatively called, warmly to recommend the Rev. Mr. Anderson's "Apology for Millennial Doctrine, in the Form in which it was Entertained by the Primitive Church." The First Part, is almost entirely occupied with arguments for the "Removal of Unfavourable Prepossessions." These arguments, of themselves most cogent, are uniformly conducted with a power which no opposition can withstand, and often with an elegance rarely excelled. Although in every instance the objections of opponents are presented in all their force, they are never left till utterly demolished, on principles admitted by the objectors themselves.

But to those who can come fearlessly to the word of God for their views, and who are willing, without prejudice, to submit themselves to its authority, it affords us more pleasure to be able to state, that, by his continuation of the argument in Part Second, the Reverend Author is now prepared to advance to "The Fundamental and General Argument for the Approaching Reign of the Son of God, Manifested as the Son of David." Having had the pleasure of hearing from the pulpit the Discourses which are thus about to be presented to the Church in a more enduring form, we are happy in having it in our power to state, that by the publication of his enlarged views concerning the restoration of the Theocracy, and the presence of the Schekinah, the doctrine of Christ's Millennial Reign will be established on a broader basis than it has ever yet received, and which, if we mistake not, will exhibit the Millenarian Scheme with all the attractions of a beautiful symmetry it has not hitherto been known to possess.

ing that it should have been so long generally overlooked and still more so that it should ever have been utterly denied. But even this forms the subject of prophecy; by which we are prepared not merely for the indifference with which it is viewed, but also for the rejection of the Scriptural Evidence by which it is supported. Our Saviour, as has been already noticed, having predicted to the disciples His coming in glory after the great tribulation, spake several parables for their farther information. By one of these, the state of the church with respect to the expectation of the Saviour's return is intimated: "THEN," or *at that time*, (of His Coming,) said the omniscient Saviour, who well knew the change the opinions of his professing people would undergo concerning the time of his Return;—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. And *five of them were wise*, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. *While the bridegroom tarried, THEY ALL slumbered and slept.* And, at midnight, there was a cry made, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*" Mat. xxv. 1—6. The whole professing church, both real Christians and hypocrites, is thus represented as at length falling asleep, from Christ's unexpected delay, and as being roused from their lethargy just at the annunciation of His return. How strikingly does this parable characterize the Christian church! Before the close of the third century, many had lost that wakefulness concerning the coming of Christ by which the apostolic age was distinguished. Afterwards the church generally was lulled into repose, (although from time to time a few have been found in all ages faithfully declaring these sublime truths,) until in later times this lighter slumber had settled into deep unbroken sleep. The Saviour represents the church as being in this state till immediately before His coming, being awakened from it only by the announcement of His return. Instead, therefore, of the present indifference and disbelief manifested by the church being evidence against the truth of these doctrines, that circumstance, taken in connexion with their recent partial revival, is in itself a proof of the time being near at hand. In the parable, the virgins continued asleep until the time

of the Bridegroom's approach. The cry, Behold, *He cometh*, was made *at midnight*, and therefore very near the morning. As in the church this cry has already arisen, His coming must be near, even at the door.*

It is on this account the more necessary that those already aroused should endeavour to awaken others, that they may be found ready to receive Him. Especially does it become such of "the ministers of Christ and *stewards of the mysteries of God*," (1 Cor. iv. 1,) as have been brought to a knowledge of this glorious doctrine to be found exerting themselves in making it known. It has too long been excluded from the Christian's creed; nor will the furtherance of God's designs, arising from our disbelief, vindicate the Church in this important omission. It can be little satisfaction to the believer to know, that his listlessness with respect to the period of his Lord's return has more effectually lulled the world into security, and that thus more obviously "*as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*" Luke xxi. 35. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. But are there none, even among the disciples of Jesus, who have in these last times joined themselves with the scoffers, who unbelievingly ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Many and precious are the promises given to the saints who shall be found waiting and looking for the Lord from heaven, but the professing church of the present day has assumed a very different attitude. The multiplicity of proof, direct and indirect, of the nearness of His return is generally disregarded, while ignorance and enthusiasm are charged on those by whom it is received. The unbeliever's proverb

* As are the predictions of Christ's coming, so is this parable, also, often applied to the time of each individual's death. But the figure is one of a collective character, representing the state of the whole church at a particular time. Independently, indeed, of our Lord's direct application of it to the time of His return in the clouds of heaven—for it is "*then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins*"—it is not even true of all the members of the church, the *wise* as well as the foolish, that before death they have fallen asleep with regard to that event, all the wise being only awoken by its solemnity when eternity is opening to view.

has not indeed been confined to the land of the literal Israel: "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth. Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord God, I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and *the effect of every vision.*" Ezek. xii. 22, 23. How clearly did the omniscience of Jesus foresee the state of the Church before His coming! and how distinctly did he predict it as being "then," or *at that time*, likened unto ten virgins who, "while the Bridegroom tarried," had fallen asleep! And the belief having once obtained that a thousand years had certainly to elapse before the coming of Christ, how few have fully examined the divine record for the authority on which this opinion is supposed to rest! Surely we will not be regarded as unreasonable, if, before submitting our faith to such an opinion, we require the evidence of its divine original. It adds not a little to confirm the truth of these doctrines, that those who oppose them generally satisfy themselves with empty declamation, inveighing against what they have not considered, and disregarding the proof they cannot refute. Those who esteem the authority of God's word as paramount, will require objections more weighty than the unsupported charges with which these doctrines have yet been assailed; and, distinguishing between Scriptural proof and futile attempts to set its evidence aside, they will be little moved by the profusion of odious names which are so easily applied, and which, in this case, have been so liberally bestowed. But, notwithstanding of the general indifference manifested, and the violent opposition some have made unto them, as these doctrines become more fully known, they are also more generally received. The prepossessions of men have been made to yield to the power of divine truth. On the continents both of Europe and America, the doctrine of Christ's Speedy Personal Return has made considerable progress.*

* A distinguished clergyman from the city of New York, when on a visit to this country a few months ago, expressed his surprise at finding this doctrine so extensively advocated among us. He had supposed its propagation more particularly confined to the United States of America, where, he stated, it "has gone the length and breadth of the land." And the Edinburgh Christian Instructor for June, 1830, contains the translation of a speech delivered in the palace of Gottorf, by his Serene Highness, Charles, Landgrave of

In England it is now taught from greatly more than an hundred pulpits, and advocated from the press by perhaps half that number of authors. The "Morning Watch," a Journal published in London, and commenced expressly

Hesse, in 1829, at the Annual Meeting of the Sleswick and Holstein Bible Society, which is almost wholly occupied with a statement of his views of the Redeemer's Speedy Personal Return. The Prince is father-in-law to the present king of Denmark, and is described as "a very old and a very worthy man," and apparently "imbued with deep religious feelings." In his expectation of the Second Advent of Christ, the translator considers him as "very sincere, talking of it as at once certain and near; and regretting in the most pathetic manner that the natural term of life must prevent him from witnessing it." It will be gratifying to friends to perceive from the following passages how accurate are his views, and how similar are the arguments advanced, to those urged among ourselves. "Can we repress our astonishment," he asks, "when we look at the past time, so utterly irreligious—in which the Bible especially, as the only true foundation of the Christian religion, was derided, ridiculed, and almost entirely rejected; and at the excellent use now made of the divine book, to scatter the light of the gospel over the whole earth? Can we fail to perceive in it the wise direction of Providence? Does not the thought enter your minds? Is not his Second Coming, spoken of by our Lord to his disciples, now near, since the appointed sign by him has appeared?"

"Mat. xxiv. 3. His disciples asked him, '*What will be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*' And Jesus answered and said unto them, (verse 14,) '*And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.*'"

"The disciples considered the coming of our Lord as the end of this world and the commencement of a new, in which, seated on twelve thrones, they should reign over the twelve tribes of Israel. In Revelation xx. 4, an account is also given of these thrones and of a first resurrection of those who had lost their lives for the witness of Christ, and these, adds St. John, 'lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' From this has been taken the idea of a Millennium. But in the 5th verse mention is made of a *second* resurrection of the dead. The world also will continue, and not come to an end. In the 8th verse is the account of Gog and Magog. According to the Asiatic researches, the Tartars claim Magog, the second son of Japhet, the son of Noah, as their progenitor. From the same source spring also the Turks, at least in part, and it appears likewise that these people, occupying at present no small part of the Antichristian kingdom, after the perpetration of great enormities, are about to fall of themselves.

"When our Lord speaks of his kingdom, in Luke xxii. 30, he mentions distinctly that his disciples should there eat and drink at his table, and sitting on twelve thrones should reign over the twelve tribes of Israel. It is also the account of a worldly kingdom, with which many other passages agree."

for the propagation of these truths, is extensively circulated ; and the “Jewish Expositor” maintains the same views—if with less decision, with less asperity also. Ireland likewise has largely received these truths;—indeed we have just at this moment (Dec. 17th, 1830,) received information that “there can scarcely be less than *one hundred* clergy of the Irish Establishment preaching the doctrine regularly.” That island has also furnished several able authors in its support : and, in Dublin, another periodical, confined almost exclusively to the elucidation of Prophecy, is the faithful “Herald” of our Lord’s Return.*

In Scotland, however, an appalling stillness prevails. From some of her watch-towers the note of alarm has indeed been heard, in solemn warning of approaching judgments, but how few of the ministers of Jesus have yet lifted up their voice to proclaim their Master’s speedy coming, or to call for thankfulness on account of it ! When formerly Christ tabernacled on earth, we are told, (Mark xii. 37,) that “the *common people* heard him *gladly*,” while the Scribes and Pharisees were his implacable foes. Yet these were most familiar with the Scriptures, and were also faithful in their injunctions with regard to legal observances : “All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe,” said the Saviour, (Mat. xxiii. 3,) “that observe and do.” They also knew the time when, and could tell the place where, the Messiah should be born, yet with awful infatuation did they reject, and persecute to the death, the Lord of glory,

* We feel peculiar pleasure in recommending the Dublin “Christian Herald,” to the attention and patronage of our Millenarian friends. Conducted with great ability and with Christian temper, and communicating in a popular form much information on the questions discussed, it is admirably adapted for general circulation among those whose situation in life precludes their access to more expensive works, or whose education unfits them for comprehending arguments presented in a more abstruse form. At a time when so many of the most eminent Christian authors, in fixing the price of their works, give little heed to the spirit of that peculiar characteristic of their Master’s ministry—“*to the poor the gospel is preached*”—it will not be considered unimportant to add, that the work, which is published monthly, is sold cheap. Although now enlarged, the price is only sixpence. It is published by R. M. Tims, Grafton street, Dublin ; and James Nisbet, Berner’s street, London ; and we hope that enterprising Booksellers in this country may find it their interest largely to introduce it here, where such a work is still a desideratum.

entailing ruin upon themselves and upon those who trusted in their false interpretations.*

* Since the publication of former editions, the Millenarian cause has indeed received large accessions, both in England and Scotland, from all denominations. Neither the ribaldry and ridicule of the profane, nor—what, to a mind rightly exercised, is much more painful—the indifference and disbelief of the church itself, have prevented the acknowledgment of these truths; and, did the strength of our cause depend in any degree on the opinions of men, the names of not a few might be exhibited, of long-acknowledged and distinguished talent, who have enrolled themselves under the Millenarian banner. The expression of regret in the text has, however, been left unaltered, as the number of those by whom these doctrines are taught from the pulpit in Scotland is still comparatively “few.” We rejoice however that the fierce opposition with which they were even recently met, by men whose ill-regulated zeal allowed them little time for close examination or cool reflection, now begins to subside. A large proportion of our ministers, awed into silence if not convinced in their hearts, already shrink from all regular discussion of the subject; and except from the anonymous revilers in periodical publications, opposition seldom rises higher than a feeble attempt at argumentation on some clause disconnected from its context, or an occasional unsupported sneer directed against brethren more faithful by far in the discharge of their trust, and haply more candid in the acknowledgment of their convictions. It is also cause for gratitude, that if the number be yet small who faithfully proclaim these truths, God has endowed some of his servants here, as well as in England, with an ardour for his work which has only been inflamed by opposition. Instances of this godly zeal might be adduced, displayed by individuals all over the country; but, besides a sense of gratitude for numerous obligations public and private, the place of eminence he occupies demands from me more than an allusion to the Rev. W. Anderson of Glasgow. From the pulpit and the press, this reverend gentleman has, with fidelity and power, laboured to awaken attention to the Coming Kingdom of Christ, in that great and populous city. Statedly, from month to month, and occasionally also at other times, with much success did he long lift up his warning voice unaided and alone, in testimony to his Lord’s Return in Glory, while assailed by the obloquy of the worthless, and suffering from the misrepresentations of his brethren; and, although no longer called in this advocacy to occupy that place of honourable singularity, his efforts are in no degree relaxed by his now enjoying the co-operation of a brother in the ministry, belonging to another section of the Church. When all the slumbering virgins shall have at length bestirred themselves, (and from the Saviour’s parable we dare not doubt they will do so,) it will be matter of gratitude to God, and remain a pleasing reflection to himself, that, amid much opposition, he was by his steadfastness made the honoured instrument of awakening many from their lethargy, when others would have lulled them into deeper repose.

But neither the silence nor the opposition of any of the ministers of Christ should prevent Christians from making a proper improvement of the exemplary punishment inflicted on the Jews, by examining for themselves the scriptures of truth, and watching with care against that spirit of unbelief which will assuredly involve many in a catastrophe still more awful. Not a few who now wonder at the blindness with which the Jews were visited, and the infatuation they displayed in overlooking evidence so full, so various, and so unambiguous, are themselves wilfully shutting their eyes against the clearest light. While we lament that darkness which so beclouded the moral vision of God's ancient people, and prevented their perceiving the promised Messiah in the meek and lowly Jesus; and while we reprobate their criminality in His rejection and accursed death, it becomes us to inquire whether there may not be the tendency to a similar spirit in our unwillingness to believe the predictions of his future glory. Guilt may perhaps be as really contracted by having our attention so completely engrossed by the sufferings and death of Christ that we disregard or discredit the testimony of God by his prophets concerning the Redeemer's glorious reign, as in being so dazzled by its splendour as not to perceive the necessity of His death for the redemption of a lost and guilty world, and the glorious display which was thus made of the divine perfections. If Jewish infidelity, with respect to the humiliation of Christ, has been visited by a punishment so severe, Christians would do well to consider whether there be not an approximation to Jewish glosses in our usual explanations, (if such they can be called,) of predictions concerning the glory that should follow. May not we be as guilty as the Jews, who rejected Him who came to redeem them from the power and consequences of sin, should we be found among those who say in their hearts, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" in the manner and at the time He has been pleased to appoint? "Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." Rom. xi. 21. Israel is not finally cast off by God. A remnant is still preserved, to whom His grace shall yet be manifested, and by whom His power is yet to be signally displayed.

But the day of their restoration will be one of awful destruction to their enemies—the enemies of God, and the enemies of men.

SECTION XXVI.

DESTRUCTION OF ANTICHRISTIAN NATIONS.

CONTEMPLATING the period when Judah, now dispersed into every land, by all oppressed, shall be visited by the day-spring from on high; and when Israel, long left to wander in the vain imaginations of their own hearts, outcast from the favour of God and concealed from the observation of men, shall be cleansed from their iniquity and brought into the land of their fathers, which is promised them for an everlasting possession,—anticipating with delight the glories of that blissful day, the Christian will exclaim with the Psalmist, “Oh! that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord brings back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad.” Ps. xiv. 7. But, before this glorious consummation, that people have much to do and much to endure. At the time when Michael the prince shall stand up for these the children of Daniel’s people, “there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time;” (Dan. xii. 1.) “For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should *no flesh* be saved; but, for the elect’s sake, those days shall be shortened.” Mat. xxiv. 21, 22. While men delude themselves with the idea of a peaceful introduction to the Millennium, the Scriptures represent it as being immediately preceded by one of the most awful catastrophes with which the earth has yet been visited. “For, as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” Mat. xxiv. 38, 39.

"Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all; even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Luke xvii. 28—30. This period of tribulation, on which we seem now to have just entered, is therefore to be of universal extent. But the specifications are much more minute of the sufferings to be endured by Israel after returning to their own land, while yet in an unregenerate state, and the instrumentality by which the Lord's wrath will be effected,—instrumentality to be afterwards visited with divine retribution for their sins. Therefore thus saith the Lord, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess; a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations....Before their face the people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blackness....The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining; and *the Lord shall utter His voice before His army*: for His camp is very great; for He is strong that executeth His word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" Joel ii. 1—11. "*The Great Day of the Lord is near*, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly; that day is a day of wrath and day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; for He shall make

even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. i. 14—18. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies.I will destroy and devour at once." Is. xlvi. 13, 14. To the penitent among the children of Israel, He saith, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: *but He shall appear* to your joy and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the Temple, *a voice of the Lord* that rendereth recompense to His enemies.... And the hand of the Lord shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies. *For, behold!* THE LORD WILL COME *with fire*, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead *with all flesh*; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Is. lxvi. 5—16. To this last prediction, the apostle Paul evidently alludes, when, addressing the church at Thessalonica, he says of the coming of Christ, "it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven*, with His mighty angels, *in flaming fire*, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. i. 6—10. "Behold the name of the Lord *cometh from far*, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof is heavy; His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire.And the Lord *shall cause His glorious voice to be heard*, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest and hailstones." Is. xxx. 27—30. "Therefore, wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all

my fierce anger; *for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.*" Zeph. iii. 8. "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. iv. 1. "And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots and those that ride in them: and the horses and their riders shall come down every one by the sword of his brother." Hag. ii. 22. "For behold, in those days and in that time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of **Jehoshaphat**, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.... Behold I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head.... Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plough-shares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of **Jehoshaphat**, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel iii. 1—16. "*God CAME from Teman, and the Holy one from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.* And His brightness was as the light; He had horns [the symbol of authority and power] coming out of His hand;

and there was *the hiding of his power*. Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow....The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. *Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thrash the heathen in anger.*" Habak. iii. 3—12.

"Come near ye nations to hear, and hearken ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree: for my sword shall be bathed in heaven. Behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood; it is made fat with fatness and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea....For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." Is. xxxiv. 1—8. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity....*I will make a man more precious than fine gold;* even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger." Is. xiii. 9—13. *Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty,* and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside

down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.... *The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled*; for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.... Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and *few men left*.... Fear and the pit and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: *for the windows from on high are open*, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth *is utterly broken down*, *the earth is clean dissolved*, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth *shall reel* to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Is. xxiv. 1—23. Now, therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a *consumption* even determined upon the *whole earth*." Is. xxvii. 22.

In this work of tremendous destruction with which the Millennium is to be ushered in, Israel and Judah shall be made powerful instruments in the hand of the Lord; and their land appears to be the destined spot for the great and final overthrow. "When I have bent Judah for me," saith the Lord, "filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And *the Lord shall be seen* over them, and His arrows shall go forth as the lightning, and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south: the Lord of

hosts shall defend them." Zech, ix. 13, 14. "But thou Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee and not cast thee away....Behold I will make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thrash the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." Is. xli. 8, 9, 15. "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it." Obad. ver. 18. "The portion of Jacob is not like them; for He is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of His inheritance; the Lord of hosts is His name. Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war; for *with thee* will I break in pieces the nations; and *with thee* will I destroy kingdoms; and *with thee* will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and *with thee* will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; *with thee* also will I break in pieces man and woman; and *with thee* will I break in pieces old and young: and *with thee* will I break in pieces the young man and the maid: I will also break in pieces *with thee* the shepherd and his flock; and *with thee* will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and *with thee* will I break in pieces captains and rulers." Jer. li. 19

—23. "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, [Zion;] that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel; for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thrash, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and *thou* shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

Mic. iv. 11—13. "And *the remnant of Jacob* shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he go through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. *Thine* hand shall be lifted up upon *thine* adversaries, and all *thine* enemies shall be cut off....And I will execute vengeance

in anger, and in fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard." Micah v. 8, 9, 15. "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness....In that day will I make *the governors of Judah* like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left; and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem....In that day shall the Lord defend the *inhabitants of Jerusalem*; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

Zech. xii. 2—9. "Behold *the day of the Lord cometh*, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city....And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem: and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together....gold and silver, and apparel in great abundance." Zech. xiv. 2, 3, 12, 13, 14. "And it shall come to pass at the same time, when Gog shall come against the land of

Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face....Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the Land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, *and all the men that are on the face of the earth* shall SHAKE AT MY PRESENCE. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him *throughout all my mountains*, saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will reign upon him, and upon his bands, and *upon the many people* that are with him, an overflowing rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." Ezek. xxxviii. 18—22. "The nations shall see, and be confounded at all their might; they shall lay their hands upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; *they shall be afraid of the Lord our God*, and shall fear because of thee." Mic. vii. 16, 17.

Let the unbeliever tremble when he reads the denunciations of God's wrath, speedily to be inflicted on guilty nations! The contemplation of such calamities being just about to overtake and overwhelm a secure though guilty world, is enough to melt the hardest heart into compassion. Truly "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. 31. Why will the wicked refuse to forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts? It is still "the accepted time and day of salvation." Let him therefore "return to the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Is. lv. 7. Oh why should he delay in applying to the blood of sprinkling until compelled, in the bitterness of unavailing remorse to exclaim, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. viii. 20. Let him betake, then, to Him who alone shall be a covert from the storm, and a hiding-place from the tempest.

Let Christians also attend to the injunction of the apostle, and "despise not prophesyings." 1 Thess. v. 20. But while they rejoice in the prospect of a speedy meeting, in glorified humanity, with their Lord and Saviour, ("for now is our

salvation nearer than when we believed,") they ought to "rejoice with trembling." The state of the church demands their persevering prayers: the opposition made to truth by their friends and brethren in Christ may occasion deep sorrow; and the objects of impending judgments call for their commiseration. There is, too, in the dangers to which they are themselves exposed, ground of fear and humility. These are indeed perilous times in which our lot is cast. Seducing spirits are abroad, of whose wiles we ought to take heed. The present aspects of society are ominous. Infidelity and indifference to spiritual things is obtaining ground in the professing christian church. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we be on our guard against unbelief, "the sin which doth so easily beset us." Alas! for the present prevalence of a false liberality, which is ever willing to sacrifice Revelation at the shrine of Human Reason. We boast of this liberality, regarding it as an attainment; although in many cases it is only another name for licentiousness; for unbelief may be displayed in various forms, and still retain its essential character of opposition to the revealed will of God. We characterize the age as "enlightened," but is there displayed a greater relish or desire for the illuminations of the Holy Spirit? Intellectuality has usurped the seat of faith. The power of Christianity is little felt, and many of its precious truths are lightly prized. This nation has been eminently favoured with religious privileges; but what is the improvement we now make of them? Every characteristic of the last days, as given by the apostle Paul, (2 Tim. iii. iv.) seems fully applicable to the present times. And the worst feature of our case is, the great ignorance of our real character which prevails, and the indifference manifested to our state of danger. There is, on the part of some of the leading men in the management of our religious institutions, an anxiety displayed to conceal the Scripture predictions of premillennial judgments. But will this ward off a single blow, or lighten the wrath of divine indignation? Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, against these lands the vengeance of God is denounced, and will assuredly be executed. Britain forms one of the kingdoms symbolized by "the ten horns" of the fourth beast, or Roman empire, seen in the visions of Daniel. (vii. 7, 24.) This beast, including all

these horns, is to be “slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.” ver. 11. It forms one also of the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s great image, which was “broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them,” Dan. ii. 35. “And in the days of these [ten] kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” ver. 44. When John, in apocalyptic vision, saw this beast carrying the Mother of Harlots, these ten kingdoms were shown unto him; “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet, [the Roman empire not having been then divided].... These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them.*” Rev. xvii. 7, 12—14. And again, he “saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him.... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Rev. xix. 19, 20. Thus is Britain included in the awful destruction which shall overtake the nations of the ungodly.

This, we apprehend, is also foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, in a prediction declaring the relative order of a series of God’s desolating judgments, from before the time of the publication of the prophecy till the final destruction of Anti-christ. This is represented under the figure of a wine-cup being presented by the prophet to the different nations in regular succession: “For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me, take the wine-cup of *this fury* at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it. And they shall drink and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me; to wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day: Pharaoh,

king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people ; and all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz ; and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod ; Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon ; and all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of *the isles which are beyond the sea* ; Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, [or “all cut off into corners,” *marg.*) and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, and all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, [Persia,] and all the kings of the Medes, and all the kings of the north far and near, one with another, and *all the kingdoms of the world which are UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH* ; and the king of She-shach shall drink *after them*. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink ye and be drunken, and spue, *and fall, and rise no more*, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, *Ye shall certainly drink*. For lo ! I begin to bring evil on the city [Jerusalem,] which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished ? Ye shall not be unpunished ; for I will call for *a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth*, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, *the Lord shall roar from on high*, and utter His voice from his holy habitation ; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation ; He shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth ; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations ; *He will plead with all flesh*, He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold evil shall go forth *from nation to nation*, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. *And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth* : they shall not be lamented, neither gathered nor buried ; they shall be dung upon the ground.... And the peaceable habitations are cut down, because of the fierce anger of the

Lord. *He has forsaken his covert as the lion*; for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of His fierce anger." Jer. xxv. 15—38.

We do not quote these verses on account merely of the awfully general and alarming denunciations of divine wrath which they contain, but also to notice the minute specification and regular succession in which these denunciations are presented unto us. In endeavouring to direct attention more particularly to them, we would desire to state our views with diffidence, and shall produce the evidence on which they are founded. The difficulties usually connected with endeavours to give an exposition of minute predictions before their fulfilment, are in this instance increased by various circumstances; while the novelty of the view about to be offered demands a full statement of the grounds on which the applications are made. But, with even a probability of the following interpretation being correct, the importance of such a prediction may be regarded as sufficient apology for the attempt. In it, then, it may be observed, there appears a regular succession in the order in which the various nations specified are made to drink of the cup of divine fury. This may be inferred, not only from the order in which they stand, but from the circumstance of the same nations being made to drink twice, as in the case of Edom; under its own name in the 21st verse, and under that of Dedan, one of its provinces, in the 23d. There appears, also, to be a repetition of judgments on Israel, under the veiled but significant names of Buz, ("despised or plundered,") and Zimri, ("my field or my vine.") ver. 23—25. The idea of *order* appears also to derive countenance from the prophet's beginning with Jerusalem and Judah at a period antecedent to the giving of the prophecy, for the effects are noticed as having been already visible,—"as it is this day." ver. 18. It is also implied in the close of the series, "And the king of Sheshach shall drink *after them*." ver. 24. This "Sheshach" appears to be no other than the mystic Babylon. There is only one other instance in the prophecies in which the name occurs: and, as if to point us to the meaning of this passage, it is in this connection: "How is *Sheshach* taken, and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! How is *Babylon* become an astonishment among the nations!" Jer. li. 41. It is true

indeed, that these words seem to refer immediately to the ancient literal Babylon. But there are circumstances in the prediction which, while they appear inapplicable to the literal Babylon, correspond precisely with the prophecies of the apostle John concerning the mystic Babylon. Thus in the 25th verse of this 51st chapter, it is said, "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and *will make thee a burnt mountain:*" Of mystic Babylon, it is said in the Apocalypse, "And the second angel sounded, and as it were *a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea.*" Rev. viii. 8. Again the Lord says of this Babylon, by the prophet, (ver. 45,) "*My people, go ye out of the midst of her,* and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord:" And of the mystic Babylon, the apostle says, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out of her, my people,* that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. xviii. 4. In the 7th verse, it is said by the prophet, that Babylon "hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand that *made all the earth drunken;* the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad :" So of mystic Babylon, the apostle was told by the angel, that "*the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*" Rev. xvii. 2. Of her destruction the prophet says, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.... Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed :" Jer. li. 64, 8. And the apostle says, "*a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea,* saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Rev. xvii. 21. To these allusions others might be added, from which it may be inferred that the prophet predicts not merely the fate of the ancient Babylon, but rather that of the mystic Babylon, thus identified by these descriptions from the Apocalypse. That they at least refer to future times is obvious from the connection of many passages which speak of the entire and utter destruction of Babylon. Its king, whoever he may be, is the *last enemy* which Israel has to encounter, which takes place at the time of their Restora-

tion and Conversion. “ Israel is a scattered sheep,” the Lord says by Jeremiah, “ the lions have driven him away: *first* the King of Assyria hath devoured him; *and last* this Nebuchadrezzar King of Babylon hath broken his bones. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will punish the King of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the King of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. *In those days*, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, *and there shall be none*; and the sins of Judah, and *they shall not be found*; for I will pardon them whom I reserve.”

Jer. li. 17—20.

We return, therefore, to the prediction before us of God’s desolating judgments upon “ all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth,” (Jer. xxv. 26,) and observe, that as “ the King of Sheshach [or Babylon] shall drink after them,” it appears to refer not to Babylon of old, but to the mystic Babylon or Antichrist. The ancient city having been made a desolation *before* the nations previously specified, we cannot suppose that it is of it the prophet here speaks as drinking “ *after* them.” This opinion also derives countenance from the fact, that upon those nations standing first in the list, overwhelming judgments have been inflicted, so far as we can judge, in the precise order of arrangement in which their names occur.

The prophecy was given (ver. 1,) in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and Jerusalem and Judah were made to drink first, (ver. 18,) in the year 606 before Christ, for the Lord *began* by bringing evil on the city called by His name. It was not, however, till 18 years after, during the reign of Zedekiah, (588 before Christ,) that the city and the temple were burnt to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar. But the words, “ as it is this day,” may perhaps have been inserted when the prophecies were collected and arranged at a subsequent period, to note the commencement of the fulfilment of this series of predictions. The next, in point of order in the prophecy, are “ Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;” (ver. 19.) and 14 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, (574 before Christ,) the disasters of Pharaoh-hophra, or Apries, com-

menced. Two years after, Egypt was again invaded and subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, during a rebellion of the Egyptians. It next came under the Persian yoke, and after struggling 64 years to free themselves from it, Egypt was terribly ravished and reduced. Thirty years before Christ, it became a province of the Roman empire, and has ever since been in *subjection to various oppressors*.

It is not very obvious who are meant by "the mingled people" who come next in order, (ver. 20;) but if by "the land of Uz," which follows, we understand the country about Damascus, so called by the Hebrews, we shall still find the same correspondence between the order of this prediction of desolating judgments and the events recorded in History. Three hundred and thirty-seven years before Christ, Damascus having recovered from the effects of the pillage it suffered at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, and being in a flourishing state, was betrayed to the troops of Alexander. Two hundred and sixty-eight years after, it was seized by the Romans. About the year of our Lord 229, Chosroes, king of Persia, took it from the Romans, by whom it was quickly retaken. In a few years after, it was taken by the Saracens, and has since been often a scene of ravage and of blood, and is at present in a state of wretchedness, which forms a sad contrast to its magnificent ruins.

The next, in the prophetic arrangement, are "all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and [its cities] Ashkelon and Azzah [Gaza] and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod," now Ezdoud. ver. 20. The land of the Philistines borders on the west and south-west of Judea. It successfully resisted the children of Israel, being frequently victorious in the wars between them; and long after the commencement of the Christian era, it possessed a very numerous population and strongly fortified cities. It has, however, experienced a sad reverse, having drunk in its turn of the wine-cup of the fury of the Lord. Ashkelon was one of the proudest satrapies of the lords of the Philistines; now there is not an inhabitant within its walls; and the prophecy of Zechariah is fulfilled: The king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited; although when the prophecy was uttered, both cities were in an equally flourishing condition. But the avenging purpose of Heaven was declared, and the vial of wrath has been poured out;

Gaza is truly without a king. The lofty towers of Ashkelon lie scattered on the ground, and the ruins within its walls *do not shelter a human being.*

“Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,” are next made to drink of the cup of God’s fury, (ver. 21,) and this seems also to correspond with the relative order recorded in history. The Edomites, or Idumeans, were both an opulent and a powerful people. During the decline of the kingdom of Judah, and for many years previous to its extinction, they encroached upon the territories of the Jews, and extended their dominion over the south-western part of Judea. Since the commencement of the Christian era, they had kings reigning at Petra, which was a place of great strength in the time of the Romans. Of the country of Moab and Ammon, even when first invaded by the Saracens, Gibbon says, it “was enriched by the various benefits of trade, was covered with a line of forts, and possessed some strong and populous cities.” But desolation has since completely overtaken them, and nothing is left but the remains of former prosperity. Moab has often been a field of contest between the Arabs and the Turks. The former have retained possession of it, but both have contributed to its utter devastation as foretold by the prophet.

The denunciations of God’s wrath having thus taken fearful effect upon these countries and cities, “to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse, as it is this day,” we proceed to inquire, Who are to be understood by “all the kings of Tyrus,” introduced (ver. 22) as drinking next of this cup of divine wrath? These we apprehend, include not merely the ancient city of Tyre with its dependencies, but also, under a concealed name, a powerful city of modern times. The prophets speak much concerning a Tyrus of which there is reason to think ancient Tyre was but a type, and with the character and description of which it did not in various particulars correspond. The wisdom of the spirit of prophecy has been displayed, in rendering predictions of a certain description more or less obvious, according as the agents to be employed in their fulfilment have more or less opportunity of knowing the parts to which they are assigned, or of being influenced by them. Cyrus the Persian, ignorant of the

revealed will of God, and having no access unto it, was called *by name* to the overthrow of Ancient Babylon, while the apostate Romish church, having the Scriptures in her hands, is denounced by both Old and New Testament prophets under the concealed name of *Babylon*. In predictions of judgments yet unfulfilled, Arabia and other nations destitute of revelation, are named without covert, while a veil seems thrown over similar predictions respecting God's ancient people, who have access to His word, and who respect its revelations. In like manner, had the name of Constantinople been mentioned expressly in Scripture Prophecy, as to be certainly destroyed at a particular time, it must have been known over Europe, whose whole political and commercial relations would thus have been prematurely affected. If, then, predictions of *such a nature* be at all given with respect to nations familiar with the Scriptures, we might expect some expedient to be adopted in order to prevent their being so obvious as to be acted upon, while yet marks should be given sufficiently distinct to enable their being recognised. This, we apprehend, is just what has been done in those predictions to which we now call attention.

Commentators have generally supposed all the prophecies with respect to the fate of Tyrus as completely fulfilled in the ancient Tyre. But there are many circumstances which constrain us to consider this opinion as erroneous. Besides the fact of their utter failure in proving the correspondence of some of these predictions with the recorded history of either of the cities of that name, there are other predictions which are obviously at variance with it, but which seem applicable in all respects to Constantinople. In adverting to a few of these, we do not now stop to notice the predictions which are really applicable to the ancient Tyre, and which have indeed been fulfilled to the very letter. This circumstance, however, warrants the expectation, that predictions yet unfulfilled will have their accomplishment literally, and encourage us in the duty of endeavouring to ascertain to whom they refer.

The prophet Ezekiel is called to take up a lamentation, "and say unto Tyrus, O thou *that art situate at THE ENTRY of the sea*, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord God, O Tyrus, thou hast .

said, I am of perfect beauty. *Thy borders [or ‘boundaries’] are in the midst of the seas,*” or “*between the seas.*” Ezek. xxvii. 2—4. Here are two circumstances, with respect to situation, which are equally applicable to Constantinople and equally inapplicable to ancient Tyre, (the present Soor.) Neither Tyre on the continent, nor Tyre on the island, were at the *entry* to any sea. But this describes, exactly, the situation of Constantinople, which stands just at the entrance to the Mediterranean, often called in Scripture “*the sea*” by way of eminence. Standing between the Black Sea and the Archipelago, the boundaries of Constantinople are also truly in the midst of, or between the seas. This, however, seems also an inappropriate description of the situation of both the ancient cities. The commentators, indeed, generally read the words, “*in the heart of the seas,*” and thus apply it to the island. But still it was “*in the heart*” not of “*the seas,*” but of the *sea*.

Against the prince of this Tyrus it is charged that he aspires to divine honours: “Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and *thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God,* in the midst of the seas, yet thou art a man and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.... Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God, Behold, therefore *I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations.... Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?* But thou shalt be a man and no god in the hand of him that slayeth thee.” Ezek. xxvii. 1—9. How far this character of blasphemous arrogance could apply to the governors of Tyre, it is not, in the silence of history, for us to determine. But that it truly characterizes the Sultan of “*the Sublime Porte,*” who styles himself “*Brother of the Sun and Moon,—God upon earth—Shadow of God—and Light of all the princes of the earth,*” is sufficiently known.

Another characteristic of this Tyrus seems equally inapplicable to ancient Tyre, and descriptive of Ottoman conquests. Says the Lord by the Prophet, (Ezek. xxviii. 13,) “*Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of the Lord,*” and what is supposed to have been the paradise of God, at the junction of the Euphrates and Hiddekel, or Tigris, is in

the Turkish dominions. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth," continues the prophet of God, "and I have set thee so; *thou wast upon the holy mountain of God*: thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.... *I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God*; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire." Ezek. xxviii. 14—16. Long has the cruel and oppressive Turk kept possession of Mount Zion, God's holy mountain,—and the site of Jehovah's temple is still defiled by a Moslem mosque,—but when did Tyre of old obtain possession of the mountain of God?

Tyrus is "a merchant of the people for many isles." Ezek. xxvii. 3. "When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandize." Ezek. xxviii. 33. This is no doubt perfectly applicable to ancient Tyre, but it is equally so to Constantinople, while the nations represented as trafficking with her, (Ezek. xxvii. 5—25,) are, so far as we can discover, the very nations which now occupy the markets of the Porte in the various commodities specified.

It is not designed to make any particular examination of the prophecies concerning the destruction of this Tyrus, or the consequences flowing from it. One prediction only, we now quote for the illustration of another. "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thy iniquities," says the Lord by His prophet Ezekiel, "by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth *a fire from the midst of thee*, it shall devour thee; and *I will bring thee to ashes* upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee."*

* It is now nearly three years since we called attention to the above prediction in its application to Constantinople, and although nothing had then occurred to give probability to that application, it has been much confirmed by recent events. The whole suburb of Pera, or European quarter of the City, *has been consumed by fire, and that by incendiaryism*. Thus the characteristic of the prophecy that the fire by which the city is brought to ashes shall be "*from the midst of thee*," or by themselves, has even in this respect been fulfilled. We do not, indeed, suppose the prophecy to be thereby completely accomplished. Immense as the loss of property has been, (which is variously estimated, from 4000 to 7000 houses,) we anticipate still the same fate for the whole city. And the various attempts renewedly made since, one of which has been so far successful, as stated in the most recent advices, give the highest probability to this being its

Ezek: xxviii. 18. This serves to illustrate what is farther said to the prophet concerning the destruction of Tyrus : “ Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus ; every head was made bald and every shoulder was peeled ; yet had he *no wages nor his army* for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it ; therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the Land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and *it shall be the wages for his army.* I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour, wherewith he served against it [Tyrus,] because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God. IN THAT DAY *will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth,* and I will give thee [Ezekiel] the opening of the mouth in the midst of them ; [by their being made to understand his prophecies,] and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezek. xxix. 18—21. From the relation in which this prediction of the destruction of Tyrus and subsequent conquest of Egypt stands to the conversion and restoration of Israel, it must be regarded as still unfulfilled. And as

ultimate fate, even if it should be for a time delayed. These we insert as being the best comment :—

“ Constantinople, Aug. 25.—Since the great fire in Pera, frequent attempts have been made to set fire to *several quarters* of Constantinople, Terapia, and even the small portion of Pera itself which escaped the late conflagration. Fire, in fact, broke out several times in Constantinople, but there being no wind, was soon extinguished. The endeavours to discover the incendiaries seem to have failed.” *Sun, Newspaper, Sept. 28, 1831.*

“ London, Sept, 28, 1831.—A letter has been received to-day from Constantinople, dated the 29th ult. in which it is stated that a *new fire* had lately taken place, by which the Captain Pasha’s Palace, some other houses, and two ships of war were destroyed. *This appears to have been the work of incendiaries,* and that their aim was to burn the arsenal, near which the High Admiral’s Palace was situated. Precautions were actively taken to check the progress of this new system of depredation.”

“ London, Sept. 28.—The Turkey merchants of the City have been thrown into the greatest excitement by accounts of *another dreadful fire* at Constantinople, at the end of last month, no doubt the work of incendiaries. The Royal arsenal has been set fire to ; but the fire was extinguished. The great destruction is *at Galata,* where the valuable English warehouses are, and, it is stated, *above 1000 of those valuable buildings have been consumed* ; the property destroyed is immense.”—*Glasgow Chronicle, Sept. 30, 1831.*

the indignation of God passes from this Tyrus to Egypt, light is thus thrown upon the next in order of Jeremiah's series of desolating judgments. After the kings of Tyrus had been made to drink of the wine-cup of God's fury, it was next presented to "all the kings of Zidon." (Jer. xxv. 22.) If, then, Egypt be given into the hand of the conqueror of Constantinople as a reward for its destruction, we are led to the conclusion that Zidon is a concealed name for Egypt, since Jeremiah represents it as next to Tyrus in drinking of the cup of divine wrath. This opinion derives support from the fact of the destruction of Tyrus and Zidon being the final overthrow of Israel's enemies. Having given the prediction of the burning of Tyrus already referred to, the prophet proceeds: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon, and I will be glorified in the midst of thee....For I will send into her pestilence; and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her *by the sword upon every side*, and they shall know that I am the Lord; [and there are other predictions of a precisely similar nature concerning Egypt by name.] *And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of ALL that are round about them, that despised them;* and they shall know that I am the Lord God.... Then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses and plant vineyards." Ezek. xxviii. 19—26. From this passage it appears obvious, that it is not of the ancient cities of Tyre and Zidon the prophet here speaks, but of powers hostile to the weal of Israel up to the period of their restoration. How truly the Ottoman power has been a pricking brier and grieving thorn to the house of Israel is too well known; and it is at the time of its overthrow that their Restoration was predicted to Daniel. (xi. 45, xii. 1.) But how can this prediction at all apply to the period of the destruction of the ancient cities? According to the prophecy, (Ezek. xxvi. 5,) Tyre has literally become "a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the [Mediterranean] sea," and the once-famous Zidon has long ago dwindled into a diminutive town, (the present Saida,) without power, and destitute of influence in the councils of the nations. The pricking brier is still

left, however, to pain the house of Israel, so that the time of the prophecy cannot have arrived.

So also are Tyre and Zidon introduced in connection with the valley of Jehoshaphat in the day of decision, (which commentators are agreed is the same with the battle or war of Armageddon, under the outpouring of the seventh vial : Rev. xvi. 14—16.) “For behold in those days, and *in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,* I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land.... Yea, and what have ye to do with me, *O Tyre and Zidon,* and all the coasts of Palestine ? will ye render me a recompense, and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head.” Joel iii. 1—4. It is also remarkable, that, while the war of Armageddon is represented under the outpouring of the seventh vial, the judgments of the sixth vial are poured “upon the great River Euphrates ;” (Rev. xvi. 12,) which, it is generally admitted, symbolizes the Ottoman Empire. The connection therefore of Tyre and Zidon with the confederation of nations, when “the Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem,” (Joel iii. 16,) may be regarded as proof that it is not the ancient Tyre and Zidon of which the prophet speaks : the former place being already so desolated as only to afford miserable shelter to a few fishermen, and the latter incapable of any important enterprise.*

If this application of these numerous predictions con-

* It was not till preparing the *third* edition for press that the author was made aware of Mr. Faber’s having treated at length of these predictions concerning Tyrus, also referring their fulfilment, to the future Restoration of Israel. When our attention was first arrested by these statements of the divine word, it was by these alone, our views being wholly derived from a careful examination of the prophecies themselves ; and we had published the result while altogether unconscious of the opinions entertained by others on the subject. Mr. Faber’s views of their proper application are, indeed, different ; but, after renewed examination, the author’s conviction remains the same. He is satisfied that many circumstances render the application of that eminent person inadmissible ; and, believing more firmly than before the views given above to be correct, he waits the issue in expectation of their verification by the event.

cerning Tyrus and Zidon be correct, there is reason to fear we have yet a still deeper interest in Jeremiah's series of desolating judgments; for, after Zidon, the next in point of order who are made to drink of the wine-cup of the fury of the Lord, are "the kings of the isles which are *beyond the Sea.*" Jer. xxv. 22. These, we apprehend, are the British Isles; their situation being beyond the Mediterranean, called by way of eminence "*the Sea,*" as already observed. Instead, therefore, of proceeding to the examination of the remainder of this important prediction, we confine ourselves to the illustration of this last-quoted clause.

We observe, then, that prophecies concerning this country appear also to be given under the name "*Tarshish,*" (a term "*denoting the utmost limits,*" and therefore expressive also of our situation, and corresponding with the prophecies we seek to illustrate, of "*the isles which are beyond the sea.*") Among the nations trading with Tyrus at the time of its destruction, it is said, "*Tarshish was thy merchant, by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches: with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.*" Ezek. xxvii. 13. Not only do these correspond with British exports to Constantinople, but other predictions concerning Tarshish seem equally applicable to England, probably referred to under this name as that of the capital. Tarshish is represented as a maritime place, and "*the islands beyond the sea*" are, in the above prophecy of Jeremiah, made to drink of the cup of God's fury after Tyrus and Zidon: so Isaiah calls on Tarshish to lamentation for the destruction of the former: "*The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for it [Tyre] is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in.*" Is. xxiii. 1. And when there appeared danger of the utter overthrow of Turkey by the Russian arms during the past campaigns, our public journals commenced their *howlings*, as if in anticipation. It is said by the prophet Ezekiel, at the destruction of Tyrus, "*all the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance.*" Ezek. xxvii. 35. It were easy to specify reasons why the overthrow of the Ottoman empire will occasion our regret and be regarded with fear. One of these will doubtless be, that "*the ships of Tarshish did sing of thee [Tyrus] in thy markets.*" Ezek.

xxvii. 25. Our commercial relations with Turkey have contributed much to the support of Mahometan despotism and delusion.

But the *precedence*, in the honourable work of assisting Israel in returning to their land, is distinctly given to Tarshish, if not *as a nation*, at least to some of her people: “Surely the *isles* shall wait for me, and the *ships of Tarshish* FIRST, to bring [to Zion] thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them.” Is. lx. 9. This Tarshish must therefore be a maritime place of modern times,—and to whom are all these predictions concerning it so applicable as to Britain? In this instance, as in those already noticed, the inference is supported by the probability. It is also predicted of the merchants of Tarshish, and others, that they shall interfere in behalf of Israel when Gog shall “think an evil thought” concerning them after their restoration, “Sheba and Dedan, and the *merchants of Tarshish*, with all the *young lions* thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” Ezek. xxxviii. 13. The exertions already made in this country in behalf of the Jews, give probability to the view of our ships being *first* employed for assisting them in their return, and otherwise interfering in their behalf; thus also countenancing the idea that this modern Tarshish represents the British nation—an idea to which all the circumstances mentioned above gives a high degree of probability.

But if so, we have much reason to fear our being overtaken by severe judgments after the destruction of Constantinople. Tyre and Tarshish are thus connected by the prophet Isaiah: “Who,” he asks, “hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of hosts hath purposed it to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish; there is no more strength.... Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your strength is laid waste.” Is. xxiii. 8, 9, 10, 14. It is in our ships our great strength lies, and by the destruction of which we should be most affected. If even these only were “laid waste,” it might indeed be

said of our land “there is no more strength :” although the expression “pass *through* thy land as a river” probably refers to internal distractions, in addition, by which also the energies of our country shall be laid waste.

Of the same period the prophet Isaiah says, “The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low....*And upon all the ships of Tarshish.*” Is. ii. 12, 16. The destruction of the ships of Tarshish is celebrated in Zion’s songs among other of God’s marvellous acts at the restoration of Israel : “Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish *with an east wind.*” Ps. xlvi. 7. From this it seems probable that the same power which shall destroy Constantinople shall also be employed, in the hand of God, for laying waste the strength of Britain,—at least of destroying her naval force. For it is also said of modern Tyrus, “Thy rowers [in the vessel of state] have brought thee into great waters ; *the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.*” Ezek. xxvii. 26. We wish not rashly or unduly to speculate ; what God’s word reveals we however seek to understand, and to apply. It may be interesting to observe whether the fate of our fleet under Sir E. Codrington, the destination of which is said to be the Mediterranean, may not possibly be involved in the prediction. But whether this be the fleet, (Oct. 8th, 1831,) or now be the time, the application of the prophecy is not thereby affected. To us it appears in various important points, very distinct. While, therefore, we look for the fulfilment of the predictions concerning the destruction of Tyrus in the issue of the present contest between Russia and Turkey, (for we consider the peace to be only *a truce,*) as a nation, have we no reason to fear the infliction of judgments through the same instrumentality ?

Daniel, in predicting the final overthrow of the Ottoman power, (this application being generally admitted, we stop not to notice the grounds on which it is made,) foretold that “*tidings out of THE EAST, and out of THE NORTH, shall trouble him.*” Dan. xi. 44. And how accurately does this describe the late movements of Russia’s conquering arms ? Europe has witnessed the minute and full accomplishment of the prediction in the events of the two past campaigns. The “tidings” of success which attended the Autocrat’s

arms both in Asiatic Turkey on “*the east*,” and in European Turkey on “*the north*,” have evidently enough troubled the successor of the Great Impostor. And if so, we may anticipate an early accomplishment of the remainder of the prediction: “Therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces [or camps] between the seas, in the glorious [or goodly] holy mountain, yet he shall come to his end, and *none shall help him.*” This is supposed, with great probability, by the Rev. Mr. Keith, to be Monte Santo, (literally, “*the Holy Mountain,*”) Mount Athos in Macedonia. The last clause seems to intimate that there is something remarkable in the circumstance “that none shall help him.” And is it not a singular fact, that while all Europe seems to regard the preservation of the Turkish dynasty as the great key-stone on which the existence of the whole system depends, and while they are deeply concerned for its continuance, not one of them took a single step directly to arrest the progress of Russia? Nor was this from any unwillingness to extend their aid to the Mussulmans. There was displayed a general fear for their fate, and a general wish was expressed for their success. In the favourable reports which were continually fabricated, in the arguments which were used, and in the influence which was exercised in behalf of the Sultan, we had evidence sufficient of their disposition to afford him “help.” But it is when circumstances thus seem to conspire to thwart the purposes of Jehovah, that His power and his faithfulness are made conspicuously to appear in their accomplishment. And it will be when, notwithstanding of European intrigue and European diplomacy, the power of the last successor of the False prophet shall be utterly destroyed, that the peculiar force and significance of the divine prediction will appear, “yet he shall come to his end, and *none shall help him.*” By whatever crooked policy we may seek to prop the falling fortunes of Mahmoud, Islamic sway is doomed to destruction, and no earthly power shall prevail for its support. Against the last successor of the Eastern Impostor, Heaven’s decree has gone forth, and if the time have now arrived he shall indeed “come to his end, and *none shall help him.*”

The Sultan has already given strong indications of his indisposition to fulfil the obligations under which he has

come. Probably but for the revolts of various Pashas he would before now have resumed active hostilities, the expectation of which has oftener than once disturbed the tranquillity of his capital. He has also endeavoured to persuade the Persians to join him in an effort to throw off the Russian yoke. A large proportion of the pecuniary exaction appears yet unpaid, and the dissatisfaction manifested by the people, and the exhausted state of his treasury, render it improbable that he will at all be able to meet these demands. On the other hand, the power of the Janizaries has greatly increased, and they have succeeded in compelling the government to abandon the line of policy for some time pursued. This Military order have ever been indignant at the humiliation of the Porte, and probably will not rest until an effort be made to wipe off the reproach,—although it may be their last.*

How near *we* may be to very severe national sufferings it is impossible to say, or whether these may at all precede the coming of Christ we pretend not to determine, although our present aspects are gloomy in the extreme. That we form one of the ten kings, or kingdoms, which make war with the Lamb, there seems however little reason to question. That will be a day of sad retribution, for “the Lamb

* There may be some who suppose that the present suspension of hostilities, (for we regard it as nothing more,) has falsified the views stated above. Of such we would request the exercise of a little patience before coming to a final decision. The prophecy, as a whole, embraces a very lengthened period, and it would be unwise to expect an instantaneous evolution of all its particular events. But we must not suppose that the sixth vial has been wholly poured out. Its contents will continue to flow until the waters of the Euphrates be dried up, and the way of the kings from the east be prepared. And as the present movements in Poland (December 21, 1830,) may lead to some great effort on the part of the immense number of Jews who inhabit that country, to regain *the land of their fathers*, preparation of their way may very soon be required.

After a most sanguinary and protracted struggle, the fate of Poland seems now determined, (Oct. 10th, 1831.) The desperate efforts of the Poles have proved unsuccessful, but the effect which these events may have upon the Jewish cause do not yet appear, although the active part taken by that people in the insurrection affords ground for conjecture that it will in some way affect their destiny. The view given above of the means and mode of the overthrow of the Ottoman power is indeed wholly inferential, and presented only as such; but still its accuracy yet remains to be determined.

shall overcome them," when He "shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance" on His enemies. Rev. xvii. 14. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. If "unto whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required," Britain has reason to dread the full weight of divine indignation. Great indeed have been her privileges, but manifold are the grounds of God's controversy with her. Highly honoured have been her saints in being made useful instruments in preaching the gospel as a witness unto all nations, but awfully aggravated has been the criminality of those who, amid the light which shone around them, have refused to avail themselves of its splendour. And oh, what a load of guilt, national and individual, has been thus contracted! On what public grounds, let us ask, can we hope that the cup of God's fury shall not be put into our hand when "all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth," shall be made to drink? (Jer. xxv. 26.) "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, ye shall certainly drink." And Jehovah's justice will be unimpeachable in the execution of his righteous indignation upon our guilty land. Our contempt of the authority of God, in neglecting the qualifications required by His word, of those admitted to the administration of matters of state, testifies against us;—the indifference of our rulers to the regulation of their decisions in accordance with the requirements and precepts contained in Scripture, and in subserviency to the glory of God, testifies against us;—the deepening groans of our oppressed country, and the state of her enslaved and degraded Colonial population, whose unheeded cries have "entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth," testify against us;—the unrepented blood of her martyred heroes, still calling to Heaven for retribution, testifies against us;—the thousands butchered for the mere gratification of her ambition, testify against us;—the millions of immortal souls which have gone down to the pit by the unfaithfulness of watchmen, preferred to *cures* for political purposes, testify against us;—our heaven-daring usurpation of the Redeemer's blood-bought and inalienable prerogative of headship to His church testifies against us;—the Romish Antichrist herself, for whose re-establishment in other lands were lavished British blood and British treasure, testifies against us;—and the present exertions at home, for giving power to the supporters of her soul-destroying delusions, testify against us.

Yes, Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, testifies against a land which early among the nations escaped from her pollutions and her thraldom, and which early testified against her domination and blasphemous usurpations! Where is now the zeal which once characterized our opposition to her who hath dyed her raiment in the blood of God's dear saints? Where the purity from her contaminations by which we were distinguished among the nations? Though unchanged in her character, and though the word of God gives no hope of future improvement, but of ultimate and awful destruction—though still claiming infallibility, and thus virtually justifying the foulest deeds she has ever perpetrated—though unrepenting of her darkest doings, and still willing to re-act her bloody part when possessed of that power by the deprivation of which alone she has been restrained—though both the word of God and the welfare of men demand entire separation from her—though all history of the past, and experience of the present, equally forbid coalition with a system directly opposed to the will and glory of God, and essentially inimical to the temporal and spiritual well-being of man—with every proper motive forbidding alliance with the abomination of the earth, Britain, by whom she was formerly abhorred, having again drunk of the cup of her fornication, has once more become enamoured of her; and a majority of our legislators seem willing to admit into the councils of the nation those they are sworn to exclude. It is truly alarming to witness the exertions made for extending the power of the See of Rome. Regardless of Revelation when its dictates seem opposed to human views of expediency, principles are assumed wholly at variance with the Word of God, and favour is shown to that system which Jehovah-Jesus has denounced, and which He will assuredly “destroy with the brightness of His Coming.”

Without, indeed, availing ourselves of the aid of revelation—whose direction no nation favoured with its light may set aside with impunity—reason itself suggests the impropriety of intrusting those with power whose principles necessarily involve its abuse. No authoritative renunciation of infallibility has been made—no disapprobation of former measures is expressed,—and no private assurance can ever form a sufficient guarantee against similar enormities for the future. There is however a singular infatuation dis-

played on the part of some who advocate the claims of Rome. In pleading for Popery, there are Protestants who assume in its favour what Papists themselves do not admit. Because, in this country, it has been under restraint, they imagine the system to be greatly improved. Its fundamental principles, however, render improvement impossible. Reformation, indeed, is not even pretended by its votaries, however its abettors may wish this to be supposed. The system is corrupt to the very core, and the Scriptures hold out no prospect but that of its certain destruction, together with those in league for its support. Yet are there many who still clamour for concession to those who only wait for the opportunity to attempt our utter overthrow.

Regarding this system as hostile to civil as well as to religious liberty, we feel surprised that the might and zeal of even unsanctified genius should be exerted for its extension. But it is still more to be lamented that Protestants who respect the law of God should ever be found so unmindful of the “sure word of Prophecy” He has given, which ought to be prized as “a light that shineth in a dark place.” Let them *there* read the character of the Mother of Harlots, the nature of her crimes, and the denunciations of her ultimate punishment. Yet, with Revelation in our hands, and with its prophecies read and expounded, Britain has not kept herself free of the guilt of giving her power unto the beast. For *twenty-five years*, did she fight the battles of Antichrist, until, with the aid of other Powers, she succeeded, in opposition to the wishes of the people, in re-establishing upon the throne of France the bigotted and bloody house of Bourbon—the zealous adherents of the Man of sin. Thus Britain is not merely chargeable with having herself contributed to the support of that apostate power, but of having then wielded the energies of Europe in her behalf. And when we are so often assured of the altered character of Popery, and while the Premier, at this moment* exerting himself to obtain for it power in our land,

* Written while what has been styled the Catholic Relief Bill was under the consideration of Parliament, and ere the too well-grounded apprehensions of its being passed into a law had yet been realized. We have since had to lament over the completed apostasy, and have now to wonder at the complacency with which its abettors look back to their success, as if it were matter of triumph to extend the power

can see no ground for apprehension, we would remember the last massacre of our Protestant brethren in the South of France, while himself present in that country, and with the power of Europe under his controul, without his making a single movement for their protection. With whatever complacency we may now regard the devoted system, it is as hostile as ever to the civil and religious rights of men, and still remains under the curse of God. The palpable change which has taken place is not in it but in us, and is only another reason to dread the weight of God's avenging justice. The more intimate our connection with the See of Rome—and there is reason to fear our apostasy will be yet more obvious—the deeper must we drink of that cup of wrath which shall be filled to the brim, and the contents of which shall be without mixture.

But it is not merely on account of sins in the national administration, that the justice of God will be vindicated in the infliction of His righteous judgments. The state of society in general is alarming in the extreme. Disease of a deep and deadly nature has overspread the land. Infidelity has made fearful progress in the world. In the church, the power of religion has sadly declined, and iniquity seems coming in like a flood. To what an alarming height has drunkenness increased, both in the world and in the church! Impurity has greatly gained ground. The sanctity of the Sabbath is more grossly profaned and its ordinances more lightly prized. There is now little of that thoroughly devotional spirit which so eminently characterized our holy men of old. Instead of the stern uprightness of decided religion, the Church is pervaded by a spirit of temporizing, which would sacrifice all proper principle to the views and wishes of worldly men. Formerly, Christians dreaded conformity to the world as a certain

of a system opposed to Heaven's will, and by Heaven devoted to destruction. And, latterly, although the observant Christian who attends to the present alarming progress of infidelity, now leavening all ranks of society with its deadly poison, will be little gratified by the recent change in the British Cabinet, he will perceive the just retribution of God in the disgraceful retirement from office of an administration the very basis of whose union was apostasy, and which hoped for permanence of place as the result of that unrighteous coalition which so unreservedly gave to the beast the power of our Protestant state.

symptom that their hearts were not right with God. Now, every thing which would indicate separation from the world must, if possible, be avoided ; and this consummation is often obtained at the expense of all proper moral principle. But the worst feature in our case is the want of a due sense of the evil, and of proper feeling with respect to our declension. Oh, what an accumulation of guilt, of public national transgression, stands in fearful record against us ! “ Shall I not visit for these things ? saith the Lord ; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ? ” Jer. v. 29. We do not, we dare not, desire the evil day, but what ground is there to hope for escape ? Instead of expecting any permanent relief from the present increasing distress, we fear it is only the commencement of overwhelming calamity. Preparation is evidently being made for the restoration of Israel by the downfall of the Ottoman empire ; and coeval with it is the period of unparalleled distress. For a length of time, the sixth vial has been pouring its wrath upon the votaries of the Eastern Impostor, and the seventh has now begun to flow. The out-pouring of the vials is indeed consecutive. They follow each other in order, but sometimes with a rapidity which allows not the effect of the one to subside ere that of the other is felt or perceived. The dregs of the sixth are not yet drained,—the Euphrates is not yet completely dried up ;—but, as if in holy haste to vindicate the righteousness of God upon the enemies of His Son, already has “ the seventh angel poured out *his* vial into the air ” which surrounds our globe, (thus indicating the universality of its judgments,) and the result begins to be seen in the fearful and bloody commotions which now convulse the Continent of Europe.

The great, the mystic Babylon is about to fall, and with it all those systems which from heaven have not their origin and power. And what ought now to be the work of the church of Christ ? And in these eventful times, when long established institutions, institutions at once opposed to the glory of God and inimical to the civil liberties of men, are being broken up—when ancient maxims of worldly policy begin to be disregarded—when the combination of powers, confederated expressly for the perpetuation of their wicked and oppressive dynasties, have lost their power of coercion —when the whole fabric of society becomes disorganized,

and every thing indicates momentous change,—when in our own country, where the authority of Him “by whom kings reign and princes decree justice” was wont in some degree to be acknowledged, a government if not more than formerly indifferent to the duties of practical godliness, one at least more openly and avowedly hostile to the religion of Jesus is popular beyond precedent—and when in England, where the hallowing influence of vital Christianity was once extensively felt, not only is a prevailing infidelity undermining the faith of our people, but where an unprincipled and satanic spirit of lawless incendiarism desolates the country, wantonly destroying the most useful implements of husbandry, and recklessly consuming the richest produce of their fertile fields;—In such an awful crisis should those be silent who study God’s word for their guidance, and who avail themselves of His “sure word of Prophecy,” as a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path, until the day of God’s glory shall dawn, and the day-star shall arise in their hearts? No, verily, silent *they* may not be. A mighty work is theirs. Theirs it is, to announce the angelic message of mercy and of woe. To them belongs the work,—and let them not forget it is their *present* duty,—“having *the everlasting gospel to preach* unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, *saying with a loud voice, FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENTS IS COME.*” Rev. xiv. 6, 7. Let the celestial message then be preached with holy zeal. Ye who are the servants of the Lord, engage in His work with fidelity, with earnestness, and with steadfastness of purpose. For the consolation of God’s dear saints, sighing for a world’s emancipation, in soothing accents sing “the hour of His judgments is come;”—for the confusion and dismay of God’s implacable enemies, thunder it into the ears of those by whom his people are oppressed—carry fearlessly the dread annunciation over the whole extent of Rome’s vast empire, the scene of greatest sin—publish the inspired authoritative message, astounding though it be, to all the nations by which she is surrounded—with apostolic power, which to the prayer of faith our dear exalted Lord will give, proclaim the unwelcome truth to earth’s remotest bound—in love to perishing immortals, communicate it as “*the everlasting gospel,*” in lands where

other “tidings of great joy” have never yet been allowed to penetrate—let heaven resound with earth’s acclaim of God’s own glory, “For the hour of his judgments is come.” Do this with affection for the souls of men, but do it for the honour of your Saviour. Do it, not from anticipation of great success, which God has not promised; but do it in obedience to His command. Do it for the vindication of His holiness in the destruction of all impenitent foes, and for the salvation of the few who shall be led yet to turn unto the Lord. O do it, whatever be the result, because it is prescribed by Heaven to be done.

Oh! it is a momentous time. What a fearful awaking will there soon be from the delusive and polluted dreams of the ungodly! What a time of trial to the saints! It is indeed matter of thankfulness that God, for His elect’s sake, shall *shorten* these days of awful “tribulation;” but especially blessed be his holy name for the gifted aids of the all-sustaining Spirit of grace. Still how long this may continue before the coming of the Lord, or what time may be occupied in the work of overwhelming judgment after his return, it is impossible to say. The ablest commentators, of opposite opinions with respect to Christ’s premillennial advent, seem to agree in believing that the commencement of general happiness, after the utter overthrow of all Christ’s enemies, will take place about the year 1867. Were their opinion correct with respect to the nature of the blessing pronounced (Dan. xii. 12.) on him “that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days,” from the rise of Antichrist, (of which however we have some doubt,) it will still give us no certain information respecting the precise period of Christ’s return, which must be some time before this happy era, as He must first “be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance” on His enemies. But at his coming, believers shall be removed from all subsequent troubles, being caught up to meet Him. “I tell you,” said the Saviour, “in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.” Luke xvii. 34. In the hope of being fellow-heirs of this glory and blessedness, “the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and the *patient* waiting for Christ.” 2 Thess. iii. 5. “Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey,

who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore; for ye know not *when* the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." Mark xiii. 33—37. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching." Luke xii. 35—37. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke xxi. 34—36. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.... Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." 1 Thess. v. 2, 6. "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer." 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 20, 21. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 23. "When he shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (because our testimony among you was believed,) in that day." 2 Thess. i. 10. "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. i. 7, 8. "Keep

this commandment without spot, unrebutable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things." 2 Tim. iv. 1---5. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Titus ii. 13. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.... Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 23—25, 35—37. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James v. 7, 8. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John ii. 28. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus." Rev. xxii. 20.

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MR. JAMES A. BEGG'S DEFENCE OF THAT
SYSTEM.

IN SIX LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

"He that is first in his own cause, seemeth just: but his neighbour cometh, and SEARCHETH him." PROV. xviii. 17.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following letters were written at the request of a friend, and were intended only for his private use. The writer has the happiness to know that they have been the means of opening the eyes of his friend to the fallacious reasoning and unwarrantable assumptions of Millenarians; and he has been induced to offer them to the public, in the hope that they may be useful to others in the same way. He is deeply convinced that the system which he has opposed is founded on principles of interpretation, which, if extended to other subjects, would lead to conclusions of the most monstrous and ruinous nature: and probably the most *effective* method of exposing the system would be follow out the principle of *literal* interpretation to its full length. To do so, however, would be a species of profanity, as it would be to turn a great part of scripture into ridicule. This, indeed, is obviously the case with millenarians themselves, in many instances; such, for example, as the absurd and ridiculous attempt to persuade the christian world that “the day of judgment,” and the “Millennium,” mean the same thing.

The letters have been revised, and in some parts enlarged, with the view of rendering them more acceptable to the general reader. And it is hoped that the limits to which the writer has confined himself may not prove injurious to the subject. It has not arisen from a want of materials, but rather from a wish to select from the abundance such as might prove most useful to those who have not minutely investigated the subject, and also to keep the work within such a compass as to make it accessible to every one.

Should Mr. Begg think proper to attempt a reply to this work, the writer will be happy to enter at greater length into the subject in a future publication.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter which accompanied Begg's Connected View* contained the request that after perusal, I would favour you with any remarks that occurred to me in perusing that book ; and although a considerable time has now elapsed since you sent me the work, I have not lost sight of your request.

Having resolved to comply with your wishes I now commence the task ; but as my engagements will not permit me to go over all I intend for some time, I will confine myself at present to some remarks on the system of literal interpretation adopted by Mr. Begg and those who maintain the same opinions.

As the whole system of Millenarianism rests entirely on a *literal* interpretation of those prophecies which speak of the coming of Christ at the period of the Millennium, it

* A Connected View of some of the Scriptural Evidence of the Redeemer's Speedy Personal Return, and Reign on Earth with his Glorified Saints, during the Millennium ; Israel's Restoration to Palestine ; and the Destruction of Antichristian Nations : with Remarks on various Authors who oppose these Doctrines. By JAMES A. BEGG. Third Edition.

will be proper to be more particular in noticing this part of the subject. And if it can be shown that the whole system of Millenarianism is founded on an erroneous principle of interpretation, it will of course be an easy matter to bring down the whole superstructure.

Having taken the literal interpretation of prophecy as the ground work of their plan, it is necessary, to maintain consistency, that the advocates of the system *assume* a great deal without any warrant beyond their own *assertion*.

That Mr. Begg has followed in this unfair and dangerous track, may be easily shown from the following quotation :—

“ If *all* past predictions, *except* where figures are *obviously* used, have had their fulfilment *literally*, even when the minuteness of Prophecy was extreme, on what principle of interpretation is a mode of fulfilment *yet unprecedented* now to be expected? We can point to a long series of predictions which have been literally fulfilled, and to others which are being so at this very day in their utmost minutiae, and can see no reason to suppose that those which, for ought we can tell, may relate to the ensuing month or the ensuing year, are not to have a *literal* fulfilment also, as no intimation is given by the Spirit of Prophecy of a period at which this mode of their accomplishment shall cease. *Thus alone* can the criterion divinely given by which to distinguish the *true* from the *false* prophet be

of any avail: "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." Deut. xxvii. 21, 22. (p. 119.)

Now, in opposition to the assertions and inferences embodied in this extract, I shall proceed to show that *all* prophecy has *not* hitherto been literally fulfilled; that in numerous instances the reverse of this has been the case; and that many of the figures employed are not *obviously* so used; and consequently that a prediction may be *properly* and *correctly* accomplished, though the terms in which it was couched were figures; and, despite this writer's presumptuous assertion to the contrary, that there have been *true* prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, though the predictions which they uttered were conveyed in figurative terms, and consequently not fulfilled in their literal acceptance. And on the principle that "what has been may be," I shall come to the conclusion that as many *past* predictions have been fulfilled in this way, so also may many of those which have yet to receive their accomplishment.

To begin with Malachi, whom Mr. Begg will not deny was a *true* prophet. We find him declaring that before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, *Elijah* the prophet would be sent. Mal. iv. 5. And how does our blessed Lord himself interpret this prediction? Of *John the Baptist* he says, "This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee," and "if ye will receive it, *This is ELIAS* which was for to come." Matt. xi. 10, 14. Will any one have the hardihood to maintain that this prediction of Malachi has been literally fulfilled, or that the figures which are employed are *obvious* ones? or will Mr. Begg, after this, presume to speak of such a mode of interpretation being *unprecedented* or *unwarranted*? Of Elias it is farther foretold that he should "turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children;" and are these terms to be literally understood? Three of the Evangelists, as well as the Baptist himself, declare that he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the *desert* a *highway* for our God. Every *valley* shall be exalted, and every *moun-*

tain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.” Isa. x. 2—4. Now, were this an unfulfilled prediction, I have no doubt we should have been told by our Millenarian friends that it must all be understood literally. It would have been insisted on, that as the Lord himself was to come to our earth, and to walk personally upon it, that nothing was more “natural” than to *prepare and make straight a highway* for him. Now, however, that a spiritual interpretation must be conceded, we shall very likely be told that the figures are *obvious* ones. To this I would only answer, that they are not half so obvious as a multitude of other passages and expressions which Mr. Begg interprets literally; such, for instance, as those passages which speak of *burnt-offerings* and *sacrifices* during the gospel dispensation, and the prophecy of the *new Jerusalem*, which he understands to be a literal city which will come down out of heaven. But of what materials it is composed, we are left in the dark.

Nor are they more obvious than those used in the sublime and poetic effusion of Isaiah, when he exclaims, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Boz-

rah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." Isaiah lxiii. 1—3. This sublime prediction our author seems disposed, from the way in which he quotes it, completely to *literalize*, and to expect that our exalted Redeemer will yet come from the places called Edom and Bozrah, fighting his way through his enemies, and having his garments literally defiled with human gore. (see note, p. 118.)

But it is not necessary for me to begin with the last of the Old Testament prophets in order to give examples of the figurative style of the prophecies. Wherever we open the book of God, we find it abounding with the most splendid, but not always the most *obvious* imagery. Who ever thought of considering the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the other prophets, abounding as

they do with dreams, visions, and hieroglyphic representations, as plain and literal writings? Who would ever think seriously of styling the book of Revelations, in particular, a plain unfigured production? Yet Mr. Begg speaks of *all* prophecy being literally fulfilled, with the *exception* of an occasional figure, and the practice of interpreting it in this way as yet *unprecedented*, and as an *abuse*, which he hopes to be able to prevent, by shewing that prophecy has *hitherto* been literally fulfilled. So fully are the prophetic parts of Scripture couched in figurative and typical terms, that I must express my astonishment that it should ever have entered into the mind of any person to doubt or deny the fact. But I proceed to give a few more illustrations, and instead of making *selections* or *picking out expressions* here and there, as Mr. Begg does, I shall begin with the very first prediction in the Bible.

To Adam, while as yet he was untainted with the pollution of sin, it was said, “of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in *the day* that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die*.” Gen. ii. 16, 17. How, or in what manner

was this prophetic denunciation fulfilled *in the day* on which the curse was entailed? Certainly in a spiritual sense and not literally. In the latter sense it was no doubt afterwards fulfilled ; thus showing that prophecy may have a twofold signification. Here, then, on the very threshold of the temple of prophecy, an insurmountable obstacle is presented to admission within its portals, on the theory of a *literal* interpretation. The “process of spiritualization,” as Mr. Begg contemptuously styles it, is the only key by which an entrance can be obtained, and even after within its walls, we shall still find this key necessary to unlock the extensive treasures which the edifice contains.

Let me direct your attention to the very next in order of the prophecies of Scripture. When the serpent had beguiled Eve, and she did eat of the forbidden fruit, and gave to her husband, and he did eat also, we find the Lord God himself addressing the *serpent* thus, “Because *thou* hast done this, thou art cursed above all *cattle*, and above every beast of the field : upon thy *belly* shalt thou go, and *dust* shalt thou eat all the days of thy life ; and I will put enmity between *thee* and the *woman*, and between *thy seed* and *her*

seed : it shall bruize thy head, and thou shalt bruize his heel." Gen. iii. 14, 15. Now, let us see what a gross piece of absurdity we should make of this interesting prediction on the principle of a *literal* interpretation. We should be obliged to understand the literal serpent as spoken of throughout the whole passage—that it was the literal serpent which was doomed to go on its belly, and to have dust for its food, between whom and the woman, and between whose literal progeny and the woman's offspring there was to be enmity—that it was this same serpent who was to *bruise* literally the *heel* of the Saviour—and that he should literally *bruise* its *head*; and all this nonsense might have been (and were it an unfulfilled prediction, we have no doubt would have been) contended for, on the very same principles and reasonings which Mr. Begg maintains and urges, with regard to other passages which are not less *obviously* figurative than this one. It would have been strenuously maintained that the literal interpretation was the "plain" and "unsophisticated" sense, and that the spiritual interpretation was "fanciful" and "unwarranted" and "unprecedented"—was a "torturing of the passage, without the slightest regard to the lan-

guage of the text, or the connexion in which it stood." We should have been told that it was "explicitly" and "expressly" declared that it was the *seed of the serpent* who was to bruise the heel of the woman's seed ; and, (it being admitted that *the seed of the woman* was to be understood of her literal offspring) that it was both "absurd" and "unnatural" to suppose any thing else could be meant by the seed of the serpent than its literal progeny.

But what must the attentive reader think of the "Connected View," and the system of literal interpretation of prophecy which the author maintains, when he finds the author himself departing from his own principle ; and when it suits his purpose, or tends to the support of his cause, hesitating not to spiritualize, and even to discover figures where no one else ever dreamed of their existence, and where we believe few will admit the fact after he has pointed it out. At the same time he lays it down as a fundamental rule, that figures are so seldom used as to be esteemed *exceptions*, and in these cases always "obviously so." But I must give an example or two of our author's penetration in this way.

In his explication of the 24th chapter of Matthew, where the following words occur,

“But pray that your flight be not in the *winter*, nor on the *Sabbath day*,” he interprets the term “winter” to mean a great tribulation which he conceives will take place immediately before the Millennium ; and the “Sabbath day” is by him metamorphosed into the *Millennium itself!*

“We apprehend,” says he, (page 140) “that our Lord, having foretold the *near* destruction of Jerusalem, and the troubles connected with it, carries forward the views of believers to the day of the Lord—the long-desired Sabbath—and to the more dreadful tribulation at its commencement, which he contrasts with that at the destruction of Jerusalem. This, we think, is that ‘Sabbath’ and that ‘winter,’ or ‘tempest,’ as the word signifies, (see Acts xxvii. 10) concerning which the Saviour enjoins the believing Jews to pray their flight be not in it.”

Now, let it be observed that, in the immediately preceding context, even according to Mr. Begg’s showing, the Saviour had foretold the “*near* destruction of Jerusalem”—that in the 15th verse he mentions the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, standing in the holy place, as a sign *when* it would be proper *to flee* to the mountains—that in the 17th and 18th verses he cautions them against certain measures that would retard their *flight*, such as returning to take their clothes

—that in the 19th verse he laments over the condition of those who would have great difficulty, if at all able, to *flee* from the misery which prevailed—and that he then adds in the 20th verse, “But pray ye that your *flight* (which he had enjoined immediately before) be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath-day.”

Could any thing be more natural, proper, and fitting in these circumstances than the prayer here enjoined, when understood in its literal acceptation—the winter season being in all respects disagreeable and dangerous for a flight, and the Sabbath-day being the season for holy rest, and religious exercises and enjoyment. But, on the theory of Mr. Begg, the words have attached to them a meaning which is not only “unwarranted” and “unprecedented,” and destitute of the “slightest regard” to their connexion with the context, but a meaning in itself positively absurd and ridiculous. For, as the tribulation itself, whenever it might happen, was the *sole cause* of the flight: surely if it took place at all, (which the language of our Saviour undoubtedly warrants,) it *must* take place during the continuance of the calamity which caused it. When the tribulation was at an

end, the necessity of flight must be at an end also ; so that to speak of *fleeing after* the “tempest” was over, is somewhat strange, more especially when the tribulation, or “tempest,” was to be *followed* by the Millennium. It is certainly a *new* idea to conceive of being obliged to *flee* during the period of Millennial bliss and felicity ; and, like many of this writer’s *new* notions, I venture to say, is not *true*. Observe also that our Saviour is first represented as telling his disciples of the *near destruction of Jerusalem* — of the necessity, and of the proper time and manner of fleeing, and then as enjoining them to pray that their *flight* be not during a calamity which was to follow about two thousand years afterwards, or, what is more remarkable, during a period of *felicity* still more remote !! And all this is maintained by an author who is most clamorous and vehement in his invectives against the great body of Protestant Commentators who are accustomed to understand in a spiritual sense certain passages which he will have literally interpreted.

Mr. B. has favoured us with another remarkable deviation from his usual system of literal interpretation, in his explanation of the predictions concerning ancient *Tyre*.

By this title he would have us to recognise *Constantinople*. He appears to be a little startled himself by such a striking deviation from his fundamental principle ; and accordingly he sets about attempting to account for it in this, and a few other instances, by the following piece of profound and logical reasoning :—

“ We proceed to inquire, Who are to be understood by ‘all the Kings of Tyrus,’ introduced (ver. 22,) as drinking next of this cup of divine wrath ? These, we apprehend, include not merely the ancient city of Tyre, with its dependencies, but also, under a *concealed* name, a powerful city of modern times. The prophets speak much concerning a Tyrus of which there is reason to think ancient Tyre was but a type, and with the character and description of which it did not in various particulars correspond. The wisdom of the Spirit of Prophecy has been displayed, in rendering predictions of a certain description more or less obvious, according as the agents to be employed in their fulfilment have more or less opportunity of knowing the parts to which they are assigned, or of being influenced by them. Cyrus the Persian, ignorant of the revealed will of God, and having no access unto it, was called *by name* to the overthrow of ancient Babylon, while the Apostate Romish Church, having the Scriptures in her hands, is denounced by both Old and New Testament prophets under the *concealed name* of Babylon. In predictions of judgments yet unfulfilled, Arabia, and other nations destitute of revelation, are named without covert, while a veil seems thrown over similar predictions respecting God’s ancient people, who have access to his word, and who respect its revela-

tions. In like manner had the name of Constantinople been mentioned expressly in Scripture Prophecy, as to be certainly destroyed at a certain time, it must have been known over Europe, whose whole political and commercial relations would have thus been prematurely affected. If, then, predictions of such a nature be at all given with respect to nations familiar with the Scriptures, we might expect some expedient to be adopted in order to prevent their being so obvious as to be acted upon, while yet marks should be given sufficiently distinct to enable their being recognised. This, we apprehend, is just what has been done in those predictions to which we now call attention." Pages 260, 261.

The Deity has not seen meet to reveal to us his *reasons* for the manner in which he has chosen to convey to us the predictions of his word; and I am not sure but that Mr. Begg, in this matter, has been guilty of seeking to be wise above what is written. Be this as it may, however, I see no reason for concluding that he has been admitted into the secret counsels of the Eternal. For if ever there was occasion to have recourse to the principle of "concealment," that case was in those prophecies which relate to the first advent of our Saviour. Yet no class of predictions are conveyed in more *literal* terms than those which refer to his birth, his humiliation, his sufferings, and his death. But notwithstanding

ing of this, the chief actors in these scenes—the very persons who put him to death—were those who not only had the Scriptures in their hands, but were the legally constituted expounders of them.

But supposing for a moment that Mr. B. is correct in his application of this prediction, and that Tyrus really means Constantinople, I would ask, may not the principle extend to other passages and other places? In one place he supposes that Egypt is *concealed* under the name Zidon, while in another place he interprets *literally* the prophecy that the Lord shall come into *Egypt*. In this confusion of literalism and concealment, what are simple people to do? Besides, may there not be *other reasons* for concealment, of extensive application, besides the one which he has had the penetration to discover? and may not the principle be extended to *things* as well as to places? Where, in short, are we to stop? He speaks of the principle of spiritualization as something which would require a *new revelation* to authorise it. I apprehend, however, that there is abundant authority for that principle in the revelation which we already enjoy; and of this I trust some *proof* has already been given, which it would be an

easy matter greatly to multiply. But what authority has been shown for supposing that the Deity has had recourse to the “expedient” of “concealment” in the predictions of his word? Has any new revelation been received by Mr. Begg to authorise its application? Why does not the Apostle Paul take advantage of it in describing the abominations of Popery, seeing the Romish Priesthood were to have the Scriptures in their hands, instead of plainly telling us that they should “forbid to marry,” and “command to abstain from meats?”

Mr. Begg has a remark which I beg to quote, as exceedingly applicable to himself and his “expedient” of concealment.

“This mode of spiritualizing certain prophecies,” says he, page 127, “appears the more exceptionable, when we perceive, that while one clause of a sentence is allowed to have a literal signification, another is understood spiritually, although there be nothing observable which can direct to such a change—the system being still further encumbered by the difficulty of managing certain portions which will in no way bend to such accommodation as it requires.”

His “expedient” I believe to be the pure invention of man, and therefore an unauthorised mode of “managing” any passage of Scripture; but the spiritual mode I have

endeavoured to show, by instances of prophecies already fulfilled, to be a Scriptural one. With regard to the “bending” of which he speaks, it exists altogether in his own imagination; and what he reckons as rendering our scheme “more exceptionable,” I esteem to be a circumstance of a precisely contrary character; for this good reason, that, in point of fact, in *very many passages*, one clause of a sentence must be understood spiritually, while *another* can only be interpreted literally. It is impossible to conceive of a more fallacious principle than one that would interpret *every* sentence either all literally or all spiritually, except indeed the other dogma of this writer, that *all* prophecy has been hitherto literally fulfilled, and of course should be all literally interpreted.

The very first passage which he adduces in support of the assertion that all prophecy has hitherto been literally fulfilled, is an instance of this kind. It is taken from the dying prophecy of Jacob, when “he called unto him his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.” Says Mr. Begg, “The Patriarch Jacob had left the consolatory assurance that the sceptre should not

depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came; (Gen. xlix. 10.) and accordingly it was not till about the time Christ publicly appeared in the temple in the twelfth year of his age, that the last King, Archilaus, was dethroned and banished." Now, granting, which we do not, however, admit, that this is both a *correct* and a *literal* interpretation, what does it avail? It is only *one point* selected out of a great number, and can no more prove that all the other parts of the prophecy were literally expressed, than would the production of one truth in this author's book prove that it contains no erroneous views.

To have established his assertion, he should have shown, that not only the sceptre was not to depart from Judah, till Shiloh came, but that Judah himself was a *lion's whelp*—that he should *wash his garments in wine*, and his *clothes in the blood of grapes*—that Isaachar was a *strong ass*—that Dan should be a *serpent by the way*, and an *adder in the path*—that Naphtali should be a *hind let loose*—and that Benjamin would *raven as a wolf*, &c.

Another of Mr. Begg's instances of literal fulfilment is the prophecy of Daniel (ix. 26,) that

that “after threescore and two weeks shall *Messiah* be cut off.” Now the term *Messiah* literally means “the anointed,” and unless we understand a *spiritual* anointing, the title is not applicable to our Saviour; and on this very ground, I believe, the Jews, (proceeding on the literal principle of our author,) defend their rejection of Christ. With regard also to the *time* when the *Messiah* was to be cut off, we are under the necessity of understanding *years* for the *days* mentioned by the prophet. True, these may be said to be expressions common to prophetic language. To this I readily assent, but then they are not more “obviously” common than are other expressions to which Mr. B. insists on attaching a literal signification.

The last instance which Mr. B. adduces as an example of *literal* interpretation, is of such a decidedly anti-literal character, that I am altogether at a loss how to account for his citation of it in such a connexion. I am not aware of any passage from which it is more obvious that a *spiritual* interpretation is at once Scriptural and proper. The prophecy occurs in the 68th Psalm, verse 18th, “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast *led captivity captive*; thou hast received gifts for men,

yea, for the rebellious also, that *the Lord God might dwell among them.*" The fulfilment of it was witnessed by the disciples, he tells us, Acts i. 9, "While they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." Mr. B. simply quotes these passages, without saying a word concerning the *captives* who followed in the triumphal train of the Saviour, and who were *led into captivity*. Without recourse to the "*spiritualizing process,*" as he contemptuously styles this Scriptural principle, it is impossible to explain the prophecy. That it has a reference to the *spiritual triumphs* which Jesus achieved over death, Satan, and the grave, the conquerors of human kind, there can be no doubt.

Again, this writer says, (p. 119) that "to explain away all the predictions concerning the glory of Christ, is to justify his *rejection by the Jews*, notwithstanding of the plain declarations of his humility and sufferings. For, if we are at liberty to *spiritualize* all the prophecies which foretell his reign in glory, how can we blame them for adopting a *similar mode* of interpreting other predictions not more clear, and far less numerous?"

All this, however, is mere *assertion*, for which he cannot, and does not attempt to produce the shadow of proof. The fact is, (and he admits it himself at p. 130,) that the

Jews entertained nearly the same views with himself as to a *temporal kingdom*, and maintained these views by a “mode of interpreting,” not merely “*similar*,” but *precisely the same* with himself. And accordingly we find our Saviour correcting their mistaken notion on this subject, not as to the *time* of the establishment of his kingdom, (as Mr. Begg insinuates) but as to its *nature*; for “when demanded of the Pharisees, *when* the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold, *the kingdom of God is within you.*” Luke xvii. 20. And I would only put the question, leaving it to any honest reader of Scripture to answer it, could language more clearly refute the delusive expectations which were cherished by these carnal and worldly men?

It is not a little remarkable, that it was on a literal interpretation of our Saviour’s words that the Jews founded their accusation of him before Pilate. And if our author’s reasoning, or rather assumptions, be correct, the Jews were right in the sense which they attached to the words, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.”

May we not ask him then, how *he* can blame them for accusing Christ before Pilate, seeing they acted on the very principle of interpretation adopted and recommended by himself? Sure they understood the Saviour's words in what *he* would call their “plain,” and “unsophisticated,” and “natural,” and “obvious” sense, and apparently in the “connexion in which they stood;” for it was immediately after he had expelled from the *temple* those who bought and sold in it, and when asked, “What sign shonest thou, seeing thou doest these things,” that he spoke the words. And the Jews, on hearing them, exclaimed, “Forty and six years was *this temple* in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” There is no appearance here of their having “abandoned” the *literal* “mode of interpreting,” of which Mr. Begg accuses them, and to which he ascribes their rejection of the Saviour. And does not this prediction afford another illustration of the *figurative* style of prophecy? or will Mr. B. venture to say, that in this case the figure is an *obvious* one?

This letter has already extended to a greater length than was intended, but the importance of examining particularly the *principle* upon which Mr. Begg proceeds required to be fully

discussed, in order to show more clearly its unscriptural, and consequently, dangerous tendency. Many passages he has quoted, which no ingenuity on my part can apply to the subject stated at the top of each section, and therefore only those passages he has *attempted* to apply, have been particularly noticed.

In my next I intend to take up a few of those passages which are brought forward to prove the personal coming of Christ at the Millennium.

I am, Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

Agreeably to my last letter, I intend now to enter upon the examination of some of those passages of Scripture brought forward in proof of the personal coming of Christ at the Millennium.

Before entering on the subject, however, I beg to call your attention to the following quotation from Mr. Begg :—

“Instead of connecting and comparing Scripture with Scripture, in order to obtain its combined evidence, it has been more usual to *assume* that Christ will not reign personally on earth, and then to endeavour *by any means* to explain all these passages, as they individually occur, consistently with the views entertained.” p. 89.

Now, although Mr. Begg appears, from the above extract, to be aware of a very prevailing error, yet he has not been able to keep himself free of the charge against which his reproof is directed. But having *assumed* the opinion that Christ will come personally at the Millennium, he has quoted a few passages of Scripture, and endeavoured, by means of “managing” them, to prove his

case ; while at the same time he has quite overlooked the many other passages of Scripture which lead to an opposite conclusion. He has taken it as a conceded point, that when our Lord is spoken of as coming, standing, dwelling, reigning, or judging on earth, a personal presence must be understood. To show that something else is to be understood when such words are made use of, I shall quote a few passages, the true import of which lead to establish a very different meaning from what Mr. Begg would attach to these terms. “Remember,” says Christ to the church of Ephesus, “from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will *come* unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of its place.” Rev. ii. 5. “Behold, I *stand* at the door and knock ; if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will *come in* to him, and will *sup* with him, and he with me.” Rev. iii. 20. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ; and lo, I am *with you* alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. So soon as Mr. Begg will take up such passages and *literalize* them, we may be induced to regard with more *consistency* his proof of the Saviour’s personal coming.

One of the strongest passages apparently in favour of Millenarian views, and one which Mr. B. quotes on the subject of Christ's personal coming, is contained in 2 Thess. ii. 1—8. Let us therefore examine this passage carefully, and endeavour to ascertain its true import.

The Apostle commences by beseeching the Thessalonians "by," (or "concerning," as Mr. B. will have it,) "*the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, *as that the day of Christ is at hand.* Let no man deceive you by any means; for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," whom the Apostle goes on to describe, and then concludes by telling them, "*the mystery of iniquity doth already work;* only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit (or breath,) of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his *coming.*"

Now, because it is admitted that the Apostle is speaking of Christ at the last day, which

of course is a personal coming, it is contended that he must also refer to a *personal coming* to destroy the man of sin, the *same* word being used in both cases. But it has been already shown that it is not unusual with the sacred writers to use the same expression in different acceptations in the same sentence; as, for instance, in the promise of the seed of the woman, &c., and as in the injunctions of our Saviour, “Let the *dead* bury their *dead*;” “Labour not for the *meat* which perisheth, but for that *meat* which endureth unto everlasting life;” and in numerous other passages.

The whole of the passage in 2 Thess. ii. 1—8, viewed in connexion with the first Epistle, leads the candid reader to the conclusion, that the Apostle, in the passage quoted, is correcting a mistake into which the Thessalonians had fallen with regard to the coming of Christ in judgment, which they expected, from what the Apostle had said in his first Epistle, would be *soon*. The Apostle here tells them that the *coming of Christ* could *not* be soon, as a great apostacy was first to take place; he then gives an account of the character of the apostacy, and concludes, by describing the manner in which it should be destroyed.

There is a striking analogy between the manner in which the Apostle describes the destruction of the man of sin, and the manner in which our Lord himself threatens to punish the Church of Ephesus, already referred to,—“Repent, or else *I will come unto thee quickly*, and remove thy candlestick out of his place,” and also to the manner in which he threatens a certain class in the church of Pergamos, “Repent, or else *I will come unto thee quickly*, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”

Let it be observed that this “Wicked” is to be “consumed by the spirit (or, as it ought to be *literally* rendered, by the *breath*,) of his mouth;” and it might therefore be maintained that this expression should also be interpreted literally, for it *implies the personal presence of the Lord* as obviously as the other expression on which so much stress has been laid. But that this part of the prediction must be interpreted figuratively, is admitted by Mr. Begg, although by so doing he is interpreting “one clause of a sentence” spiritually or figuratively, while “another” is understood literally, a practice which he reprehends in others. “The fulfilment of this part of the prediction,” says he, “has

been *witnessed since the Reformation.*" Yes, its spiritual fulfilment has indeed been witnessed, in the effects of the preaching of the gospel, and the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ, by which the man of sin is being gradually consumed away, and he will be utterly annihilated by the bright shining of the gospel light, and by the more copious effusion of the Spirit, as well as by the judgments which, in the dispensations of Providence, will be executed upon him.

But, says Mr. Begg, p. 162, "The *same word* is used in both cases; and to *imagine* that the Apostle, while *professedly* correcting a mistake into which his readers had fallen, about the *personal* coming of the Lord, should, *instead*, inform them of the period of a *spiritual* advent, without giving them any intimation of the *substitution*, is to suppose him guilty of a *sophism* which would not be practised by any *honest* man."

To *imagine* such a thing is no doubt very bad; but who has been guilty of *imagining* it? I venture to assert, without the fear of contradiction, that such a thought never entered the imagination of any one save Mr. Begg himself; and he is guilty also of the additional sin of imputing his own evil imagination to those whom he is opposing, besides presumptuously dictating to the Apostle as to

the manner in which he should express his ideas.

What was the mistake which the Apostle was *professedly* correcting? Was it not that the day of Christ was *at hand*? And is not that mistake fully corrected, by the Apostle telling them that "*that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first*, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." The Apostle, therefore, *does* correct the mistake into which the Thessalonians had fallen. He does not merely *profess* to do it, and then tell them, *instead* thereof, of the period of a spiritual advent. He corrects the mistake most clearly, and, *besides*, informs them of something else. It was not necessary, therefore, that any intimation should be given of a *substitution*, for no such thing was made. This writer has the entire merit of being the author of all the *substitution*, and *sophism*, and *dishonesty*, to be found in the matter.

He adds, "the word here translated *brightness*, which, Parkhurst observes, the Greek writers particularly apply to the *appearance of some deity*, is, in Scripture, never used but to denote a personal manifestation." p. 163. This is one of those cases in which, by giv-

ing one portion of truth, and withholding another, a false impression is produced.

What will be thought of the above, when it is told, that the *very word* from which the substantive rendered “*brightness*” is derived, is used by the Apostle to express the *promulgation of the gospel*, the precise sense which should be attached to the word in 2 Thess. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath *appeared* (or *brightly shone*,) to all men.” Titus ii. 11. The words in the original are as much the same as the terms *appeared* (*επιφανω*,) and *appearance* (*επιφανιας*,) and they are so rendered by our translators. With the aid of this sense of the word as used in Titus, the passage under discussion acquires peculiar significance, beauty, and clearness. Antichrist is represented as being *gradually consumed* by the power and light of the gospel, (“witnessed since the Reformation,”) and *utterly destroyed* by the more glorious effulgence of Gospel light. Besides, the word itself is used by the Apostle in describing the *first appearance* of Christ, and though, of course, it refers to a personal manifestation, it is used in a *very different* acceptation from that in which it must be

understood in those passages which speak of his coming in glory.

The next of those passages quoted by Mr. Begg in support of his doctrine of the personal presence of Christ on earth, which I shall notice, is contained in Matt. xxvi. 29, “But I say unto you, I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” These are the words of our Saviour, delivered on the solemn and interesting occasion of his last supper with his disciples. The meeting to which our Lord refers, Mr. Begg says, must be personal, and take place on earth, because of the terms used, “fruit of the vine,” and “drink it new with you.” This writer, whose reproof of those who neglect to compare Scripture with Scripture has been already noticed, has here again exhibited how easy it is for him to adopt a Scriptual rule, and how easy it is, when it suits his purpose, to depart from it. That our Saviour intimates a separation and a meeting again, and that meeting a personal one, is undeniable. But that he refers to a meeting on earth I cannot allow. The terms of this consoling declaration, we have abundant authority to believe, convey the idea of

intimate communion and fellowship ; and the disciples, now that they were to lose the society of their Lord, would be able to appreciate, in its fullest extent, the joyful hope of resuming, in a more exalted state, the intimate fellowship and communion they had enjoyed on earth. And believers in all ages have rejoiced, and do rejoice in the hope of that transcendent bliss which is in store for them, and which they shall enjoy when they meet with Christ in glory. In support of this view of the passage, I refer you to Rev. iii. 20, already quoted. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any one heareth my voice and openeth the door, I will come in to him, *and sup with him, and he with me.*” Let Mr. Begg’s “consistency” appear by comparing this passage with the other.

I would next refer you to Mr. Begg’s interpretation of our Lord’s prayer, when he would have us to understand the petition, “Thy kingdom come,” to convey the desire of God’s people for the temporal kingdom which he expects will be set up at the Millennium. This passage struck me with greater force than any other which he has quoted to corroborate his notion of a *personal reign.* But the cause of my surprise originated in

not having ever entertained the possibility of a question as to the meaning of the prayer.

It is an easy matter to show that our author has here again departed from his acknowledged rule of comparing Scripture with Scripture. I shall only quote a few passages which will *contrast* excellently with Mr. Begg's views.

When our Saviour sent forth his disciples to preach the gospel, he desired them to say, “The kingdom of God *is come* to you.” To the young man who came to Christ, asking what he should do to obtain eternal life, our Saviour said, “Thou art *not far* from the kingdom of God.” Again, referring to the preaching of John the Baptist, he says, “Since that time the kingdom of God *is preached*, and every man *presseth into it*.” These passages are but a few of those which clearly prove the correctness of our application of the petition, “Thy kingdom come,” to the promulgation of the gospel. But how, on Mr. Begg's hypothesis, are we to understand the following passages?—“The kingdom of heaven is like to a *grain of mustard seed*.” “The kingdom of heaven is like unto *leaven*.” “The kingdom of heaven is like unto *treasure hid in a field*.” “The kingdom of hea-

ven is like unto *a merchant seeking goodly pearls.*" "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a *net.*" Matt. xiii. 31, 33, 44, 45, 47.

Now, sir, instead of joining with old Simeon and others in their joy that the salvation of Israel "spoken of by the prophets" *was come* when Christ appeared in our world, Mr. Begg seems unable to discover any glory in Christ's first advent. And instead of applying to that wonderful event the prophecies in the Psalms which express rapturously the joy of God's people in looking forward to that event, he is still in the state of the unbelieving Jews, who have not discovered "any beauty in him that they might desire him."

I intended to have said something on those passages which Mr. Begg quotes from the Psalms, which he appears to "manage" so well, such as that in Psalm cii.—a Psalm, let it be observed, which was written during the Babylonish captivity, while the temple was yet rased to the ground, and Jerusalem lying waste. While the Jews sat by Babel's streams, and thought upon Zion, they sung these enlivening songs in anticipation of their return to those scenes of their nativity which were so dear to them. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to fa-

vour her is come, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory." This last sentence, no doubt, was expressive of their joyful expectation that the glory which was manifested to God's people in former times was again to be made to shine forth in his temple.

This letter has already extended beyond my limits, but I hope you will not find it unworthy your attention. In my next, I shall enter upon the subject of the first resurrection. Till then, believe me,

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

In my last letter I have discussed at some length the passage in 2 Thessalonians, which, by Millenarians, is usually esteemed one of their impregnable strongholds, and I trust that what has been said will convince you

that it affords but little support to their scheme. I do not intend to go over the whole of the passages in which Mr. Begg affects to discover evidence for his favourite views, nor is it at all necessary, as the remarks that apply to one passage will be found, in many instances, to apply to others. But as I have no wish to evade the question, I shall now go on to a consideration of the celebrated passage in the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelations, which is generally admitted to afford the most plausible arguments in support of the Millenarian cause.

It may be as well to quote the passage at length, that you may have it under your eye, and so be able to judge of the propriety of my observations.

After giving an account of the binding of Satan, and of the casting of him into the bottomless pit, there to be shut up for a thousand years, the Prophet goes on to say, " And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor

in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power : but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. xx. 4—6.

This passage Mr. Begg interprets as usual, *literally* ; and it thus affords him ground on which to build two of the tenets of Millenarianism, namely, the pre-millennial resurrection of the saints, and their reigning as kings with Christ on earth during the Millennium. I need scarcely say, that I understand this passage in a spiritual sense, and as intimating that there will be, at the period referred to, a great revival of religion, and, in particular, of the ardour, purity, and devotedness of soul that characterized the martyrs and witnesses of Christ during the dominancy of the man of sin. This revival is called a resurrection, and is compared, or contrasted with the great event which that term, when literally understood, expresses. Living and reigning with Christ, I understand to mean the

great honour and felicity to which the saints of God will be exalted at that day. As my views of this passage, however, will be more fully unfolded in the course of the remarks which follow, I waive at present the more explicit statement of them.

In support of this view of the passage, I would remark, first, that it is *more in accordance* with the *general* structure of the book of Revelation to understand it spiritually than literally. This remark is expressed with much force and clearness by Dr. Wardlaw, in a passage which our author quotes; and the remarks of Mr. Begg on it and on the whole of this passage, are perhaps as pretty a specimen of petty nibbling criticism as you have ever witnessed. “Did the words occur,” says Dr. Wardlaw, “in an historical or epistolary composition, it would justly be pronounced unnatural, (unless we were specially warned of the writer’s purposed deviation from his ordinary style) to explain them symbolically. Now, in a professedly symbolical book, there is the very same force of objection against their being interpreted *literally*. The interpretation is not in harmony with the avowed and universally admitted style of the writer, and the principle on

which his entire work is constructed. Why are we, therefore, to understand literal thrones of earthly dominion, and a literal corporeal resurrection of men to sit upon those thrones, when all around is symbolical and figurative?" Let me ask you, is not this a common-sense view of the matter? and can you conceive of a principle more fair and obvious? Though the general style of this part of Scripture is symbolical, I do not contend (nor is it necessary, as all general rules have some exceptions,) that there are no literal expressions in it; but I do insist that, if there be any, they are *exceptions*, and, unless where obvious, must be shown to be such on special grounds. We have all the advantage of *a general rule* for the spiritual interpretation, and this affords presumptive evidence in its favour. It throws the burden of proof on those who hold by a *literal* interpretation, and entitles us to ask, as Dr. Wardlaw does, *Why* are we to interpret the passage in question on a different principle from that on which the other parts of the book are interpreted? And how does Mr. Begg attempt to do away the force of this remark? Why, all that he does is to show that there are *a few* literal expressions in this "symbolical book;"

and he gravely concludes by saying, “ that if *this* (alluding to the phrase, “ the kingdoms of this world,”) is not to be understood symbolically, the supposed ‘ force of objection’ against *the literal interpretation of all other passages is destroyed!* ” This is a fine illustration of the logical absurdity of arguing by the *rule of contraries*, and is not more opposed to all sound ratiocination, than it is detrimental to Mr. Begg’s own views ; for if his reasoning be sound regarding a symbolical book, it must be equally so when applied to a literal narrative. It has been said, that an exception rather *strengthens* a general rule. Mr. Begg, however, is of a contrary opinion. According to him, it is “ *destroyed* ” by it.

My second remark in support of the figurative interpretation of this passage, is derived from the fact, that, at the period to which the prophecy refers, (namely, the commencement of the Millennium,) a great revival of religion will take place. This fact is so palpably obvious from the predicted features of the Millennial age, that I had thought it was universally acknowledged. But it seems not. Mr. Begg, from no other cause, apparently, than a reckless spirit of

opposition, endeavours to throw discredit upon it.

"Let us," says he, "for a moment suppose that this passage is not to be understood as speaking of a literal resurrection of these saints, but of a resurrection of the *principles* they held, and see how this will accord with the language employed. A resurrection, it will be admitted, presupposes *the death* of the subject to be raised; and therefore, before there can be a resurrection of Christian principles, they must first *have died from the earth*. And how does this supposition coincide with the idea generally entertained, that the present laudable exertions for the diffusion of the gospel shall progressively increase, until it be ultimately successful in the conversion of the whole world, and the glorious day of promise realized in the universal reception of its gracious truths?"

It is not a matter of great consequence, for the present discussion, what ideas are "generally entertained." What I maintain is, that a great, nay, the greatest, revival of religion will take place at the period immediately preceding the Millennium. Out of numerous passages of Scripture which might be quoted in proof of this, I select one. Rom. xi. 12, 15. "Now if the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how *much more* their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling

of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but *life from the dead?*" Here, then, we have a prediction, in terms not to be misunderstood, of a great revival of religion, precisely at the period to which the prediction under consideration refers. And not only is a revival of religion here predicted, but it is expressed in figurative language precisely similar, if not quite the same as that used by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation—"as *life from the dead.*" It will greatly exceed what took place at the first promulgation of Christianity, great and magnificent as that was. Not only will the Jews be raised from the spiritual death in which their unbelief has so long entranced them; but also among the gentile nations, there will be an awakening from the sleep of spiritual death so great and so general as to be fitly denominated a resurrection,—“as life from the dead.”

But there is another fallacy in the reasoning of Mr. Begg, which it is proper to notice. He is pleased to tell us, that, “before there can be a resurrection of Christian principles, they must first have *died from the earth.*” Now, any person with ordinary judgment may easily discover, that all that is necessary

either to a spiritual or a literal resurrection, (for the same remark applies to both,) is, that the objects of it, the persons to be raised, have been previously in a state of death, whether spiritual or natural. The former of these is the condition in which the Jews, as well as the greatest proportion of the Gentile nations, are lying at the present time. And when the Spirit of God shall breathe into millions of them the breath of spiritual life, it will be a scene of such magnificence and importance as to be fitly represented as a resurrection.

An objection is started by Mr. Begg against viewing the event in question as of a spiritual nature, from its being called “*the first* resurrection.” “If this resurrection,” says he, “meant merely the revival and extensive prevalence of religion, still we may ask, would such a revival at any future time, after the various out-pourings of the Holy Spirit, in different ages, be yet styled the *first* resurrection.” To this I reply, that the term *first*, in Greek, as well as in English, is frequently used in the sense of *great* or *chief*, and the latter word is not unfrequently employed in our translation of the scriptures, where the word *first* occurs in the

original. There would be no impropriety, therefore, in rendering the passage, “This is the *great* resurrection,” or revival of religion. But not to insist on this, I can see no difficulty in supposing that this spiritual resurrection is called the *first*, in order to contrast or compare it with the literal resurrection at the last day ; and there appears as much analogy, or as many points of resemblance, between these two resurrections, as there is between natural death and the *second death*, mentioned in the 14th verse of this 20th chapter of Revelations. Indeed the sacred writers, in many cases, contrast or compare natural and spiritual things in this manner. Thus we read of being “born *again*,” of the *first Adam*, and the *second Adam*, of the *seed of the woman* and the *seed of the serpent*, &c. This objection, therefore, when properly examined, is found to have no weight whatever. I go on, therefore, to the consideration of another objection, which is contained in the following extract.

“There is another inconsistency in the supposition of anti-millenarians. These principles having had part in the first Resurrection, on such the second death hath no power.’ Now as, upon their hypothesis, the first death of these principles must have taken place before the Millen-

nium, seeing that at that time they shall enjoy a resurrection, so we must suppose *the second death* their future decay or extinction. Not only is this however, quite at variance with the scriptural account of the nature of the second death (which means being cast soul and body into the lake of fire, Rev. xx. 44,) but that even such a death as we are now supposing, or that a death of *any kind* should again have influence on those who have part in the First Resurrection, is directly opposed to the statement made by the apostle, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection, for on such the second death (be it what it may, in the opinion of our friends,) hath no power. Yet if Christian principles are to be understood as those who have "part in the First Resurrection," we find that when Satan is again loosed from his prison, an apostacy takes place, which shows that he has obtained *much* power over them in *this* sort of second death. If then it had been of those, it was said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection," could it have been added, "on such (principles) the second death hath no power."

Now really this is one of the most grotesque pieces of argumentation that ever came under my observation. "*We must suppose,*" says he, "*the second death* their (principles) future decay or extinction!" Why he imagines *we must suppose* this, is to me somewhat strange. Though the "*apostacy*" to which he refers were the death of these principles, and though they were to die twenty times over, that would never prove that

any one of them was “THE second death” referred to in the 14th verse. *That* death is to be inflicted on a quite different class of objects from either Christian principles, or Christian men. Besides, I deny that upon our hypothesis the *first* death of these principles was to take place immediately before the Millennium. That a death or decay of them will take place some time before the millennium, is clearly revealed in the 11th chap. of this book, where the “two witnesses” who prophesied during the continuance of the great apostacy, are represented at the end of 1260 days, as being *slain* by the beast, and as lying dead three days and a half, when they were again raised to life, and received up into heaven in the sight of their enemies. But this is no where called their *first* death. The statement of the apostle, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, for on such the second hath no power,” is not, therefore, opposed to the view of its being a spiritual resurrection that is spoken of. This is abundantly obvious indeed, from its *nature*, consisting in the regeneration and conversion of the soul to God. The second death will never have any power on those who have part in *this* resurrection.

But while the benediction of the Apostle beautifully harmonizes with this view of the matter, it is “*directly opposed*” to that of Mr. Begg; for according to him, many of the wicked—“the giants in crime,”—on whom, in an especial manner, the second death *will* have power—are to have *part* in “the first resurrection,” though they are neither among the blessed nor the holy.

But, that “a death of *any kind*,” we are told, will again have influence over those who have had part in the first resurrection, is “*directly opposed*” to the benediction of the Apostle. Very true, but there is a wide difference, which even a child may discover, between “the first resurrection” and those who have *part* in it. The blessing is not on the *resurrection*, but on *those* who shall enjoy it. That the great revival of religion, with which the Millennium commences, will be followed by an apostacy, after the thousand years are finished, is unquestionable; but all those who shall be the subjects of the revival—all who shall be raised up from being dead in trespasses and sin, to a life of holiness and communion with God—will be placed beyond the influence of *the second death*; which, by the way, is the *only* one specified from which

they are exempted, though Mr. Begg chooses to assert, that no death of *any* kind will have power over them.

Much of the confusion in which Mr. Begg has ingulphed himself, seems to arise from his imagining that it is a revival, or resurrection of Christian principles in an *abstract* form—an idea certainly sufficiently absurd to pass unnoticed; but it is rather amusing to observe him attempting to throw the absurdity of it on his opponents.

“The saints,” says he, “whom the Apostle describes as having lived in the first resurrection, shall also be “priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign *with* him a thousand years.” And how is this to be understood of Christian principles? In what possible sense can Christian principles be called “*priests* of God and of Christ? And in what possible sense can these principles be said to reign with Christ?”

One can hardly conceive of any thing bearing the name of criticism, more puerile and contemptible than this. Surely, if Christian principles are to gain the ascendancy, and to become the governing and the ruling motives in every department of society—in the palace of the king, as well as in the cottage of the poor—it must be by being acknowledged, felt, and honoured, in the hearts of men of

all ranks and degrees. It does not require any great stretch of imagination, nor a very erudite acquaintance with figurative language to perceive, that when Christian principles are spoken of as being highly honoured, it must be in the persons of those who profess them and feel their power. Yet Mr. Begg seems to feel great difficulty in understanding this. He cannot comprehend in “what *possible* sense” such things can be. It would seem that he has, in this instance, shut out the little light which would have enabled him to discover how it *is* possible.

I am here *assuming* (what, however, I do not admit,) the correctness of the phraseology employed by Mr. Begg in denominating it a resurrection of Christian principles. I would prefer speaking of it as a raising up of men possessing the same character and zeal, and devoted intrepidity, which distinguished the martyrs and confessors of our blessed Lord. On this account they are viewed as *one body*, possessed of a continued identity throughout different ages. The witnesses of Jesus are so recognised in the 11th chapter of this same book, in a passage already referred to, where they are described as two in number, and as

continuing to testify for Christ during the 1260 years of the reign of Antichrist.

We find the same principle recognised by Paul, when speaking of this very subject of the resurrection. “*We*,” says he, “who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” &c. and “*We* shall not all sleep,” &c. Thus viewing himself and his fellow-Christians of all ages *as one*; and the honours and blessings conferred on them in one age, are viewed as belonging to all. On this principle also we must explain the triumphal song of the righteous in heaven, referred to by Mr. Begg,—“Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, *and we shall reign on the earth.*”

What may be the precise ideas intended by the words, “kings and priests unto God,” it is not necessary at present particularly to inquire. But I beg to remark, that the same language is employed by the Apostle Peter, in describing the Christians of his time, in which case, certainly, something very different from “literal thrones of earthly dominion” is intended: 1 Peter ii. 9—“Ye are a chosen generation, a *royal* (or *kingly*) priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” &c. This is a passage which is well suited to illus-

trate the one under consideration ; and notwithstanding of Mr. Begg's commendation of the duty of comparing Scripture with Scripture, he has not chosen it for this purpose. His reason for not doing so is obvious.

The only other passage which affords the semblance of support to the doctrine of two literal resurrections, is that in Daniel xii. 2. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and contempt.” Because it is here said, that it is only “*many of them,*” and not *all*, “who sleep in the dust of the earth” that shall awake, it is contended that there must be another resurrection, when the remainder shall be raised up. But if we only give a little attention to the duty, so properly recommended by Mr. Begg, of comparing Scripture with Scripture, we shall soon discover that there is no force in this objection. I need not remind you that the term *all* is frequently used in Scripture in the sense of *many*. This is generally known and admitted. But that the term *many* is used in the sense of *all* is also very evident from the following passages. Rom. v. 15, 19, “Through the offence of one, *many* be dead.” “By one man’s disobedience *many* were made

sinners.” Micah iv. 3, “He shall judge among *many* people, and rebuke strong nations afar off.” In these cases, and others which might be quoted, it is obvious that the term *many* is used when *all* is meant; and if, therefore, we substitute the latter term for the former in this passage, all the difficulty connected with it vanishes. “And *all* of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” Mark, now, how beautifully the statement of Daniel harmonizes with the declaration of our Saviour in John v. 28, 29—a passage which, be it observed, Mr. Begg has not thought proper to “compare” with the other parts of Scripture which speak of the subject, and I must therefore supply his lack of service—“Marvel not at this; for the *hour* is coming, in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” These passages are so remarkably parallel, and so conclusive as to the point in dispute, that I might safely let the subject rest with the mere statement of them.

But, as Mr. Begg has spent some time in reasoning on a few passages which he deems

of a less decisive character than that in Daniel, I cannot drop this part of the subject without noticing two of them, resting assured that all the others will naturally appear, when viewed in the same manner, to have a clearness and beauty of which they are deprived by Mr. B.'s mode of application.

The first of these is contained in Isaiah xxvi. 19. "*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.*" You will observe that Mr. B. will have it quoted without the words supplied by our translators. To this there can be little objection, as the sense is still the same, though not so fully expressed. "*Thy dead shall live; my dead body shall they arise.*" Believers are so frequently spoken of as one with Christ, and what is done to *him*, is so often spoken of as done to *them*, that we may with great propriety refer the words, "*my dead body shall they arise,*" to believers as well as to Christ. The following passages, however, will clearly show what was the resurrection here spoken of. Colossians ii. 12, "*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.*" Rom. vi. 4, "*We are buried with him by baptism into death;* that like as Christ was raised up from the

dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.” And again, Colossians iii. 1, “If ye then be *risen with Christ.*” These passages so evidently refer to the same resurrection of which the prophet Isaiah spoke, that the wonder is that there should be any question on the subject. Not only are the *ideas* precisely the same, but the very *words* correspond. “*With my dead body shall they arise.*” “*Ye are risen with Christ.*” And the Apostle at once leads us to the true meaning of this resurrection from *being buried*, as a resurrection to *newness of life.*

The other passage I refer to is taken partly from Isaiah, “Death is swallowed up in victory,” and partly from Hosea, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Mr. B. quotes, in connexion with this passage, 1 Cor. xv. where it is quoted by the Apostle and applied by him. The Apostle refers it to a period when there shall be a *literal* resurrection, and Mr. B. readily follows him in this. But as to *the time* when this resurrection takes place, there is a wide difference between them. That the Apostle refers it to the end of the world is evident from the expression, “death is swallowed up

in victory.” Words could not more explicitly declare that death is then to be destroyed and completely done away. That this was virtually accomplished when our Saviour rose from the grave and ascended up on high, and that *death* was one of those “*captives*” which were “*led into captivity*,” will not be doubted by Mr. Begg himself. But he must acknowledge that he is not at one with the Apostle, if he would have us apply the words “*death is swallowed up in victory*,” to a period when death *is not* to be destroyed. He allows that during the Millennium death *will* have power over men, and even quotes a passage in proof of this from Isaiah—“*The child shall die an hundred years old*”—at once destroying his application of these words, “*death is swallowed up in victory*”—words which can only be literally fulfilled in the destruction of the *last* enemy at the general resurrection of the dead.

What has been said above appears to me sufficient to prove that the *first* resurrection referred to in the book of Revelation is not to be a *literal* resurrection of the dead, and consequently that the ground taken up by Mr. Begg is quite untenable.

In my next letter I shall enter on the sub-

ject of sacrifice, which this writer would have us believe is again to be established as an ordinance in the church. In the meantime,

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

Let me now, as proposed, call your attention to Mr. Begg's remarks concerning the continuance of sacrifice, and the Mosaic ritual during the Christian dispensation.

A more preposterous attempt to set aside a great and glorious Christian doctrine is nowhere to be found. I shall begin by quoting from Mr. Begg on the subject, and having his words before me, proceed to examine the theory he maintains.

"Once more let us ask, can all this be viewed as intimation of any thing else than the re-erection of the literal Temple, and the *re-institution* of sacrifice? We are not unaware of the arguments which have been founded on certain expressions in the Epistles, nor do we seek to conceal the fact, that these expressions, *taken by themselves*, do seem to countenance the opinion that the ritual observances were

only designed to continue till the introduction of Christianity. But it is to be remarked, that, in such cases, the argument is generally directed against *the abuse* of these ordinances; and expressions used, perhaps, concerning that abuse, may *seem* to bear against the continuance of the ordinances themselves. But it would not at all affect the question concerning *millennial* sacrifice, even if it could be satisfactorily established that the observance of the *Mosaic* ritual was authoritatively discontinued after the death of Christ. But *in reality* we do not find *any* authoritative abolition of sacrifice in the New Testament, while the known practice of believing Jews generally, and of holy apostles in particular, demonstrate that there is in sacrifice itself nothing incompatible with the nature of Christianity."

Pages 105, 106.

There is an obvious inconsistency in the statements of our author in this extract. Though he asserts pretty confidently that the ritual observances of Moses have *not* been authoritatively abolished, he has evidently some doubts of the tenableness of this opinion, and accordingly, when driven from it, he is prepared to maintain the *re-institution* of these observances. But according to a well known law in civil jurisprudence, he is not entitled to take advantage of two modes of proof, the one of which is subversive of the other. If sacrifice *has not* been abolished, it requires no *re-institution*, and if it has been

re-instituted, it must have been previously abrogated.

That it has been abolished, and that *in terms*, and *for reasons* which *utterly preclude* the idea of its ever being re-established, I firmly maintain ; and I shall now proceed to state the evidence on which that opinion is founded.

The epistle of Paul to the Galatians is almost wholly taken up with showing that justification is not obtained by a performance of the law of Moses, but by faith in Jesus Christ; and it is *impossible* to understand the language of the apostle without supposing that that law was *no longer obligatory*. For if it was still binding, obedience to it would still have been necessary, not only to the *evidencing* of faith, but to its very existence—for “*faith without works*,” (that is, without obedience to all the commandments of God) “*is dead, being alone.*” “For as the body without the spirit is dead; so faith *without works* is *dead also.*” 1 John ii. 26. Though the Apostle held that salvation was by faith alone, he uniformly maintained that this was rather an additional reason why obedience should be yielded to all that God required. Instead of *weakening* the bonds of obligation

it strengthened them. And though the Apostle speaks of being *dead* to the moral law, it was only in its covenant form, and as a ground of acceptance with God, for he was still *alive* to it through Christ—that is, he was constrained by love and gratitude as well as by duty, to make it his constant study and delight. It is otherwise, however, with the *ceremonial* law, which existed *only* in a covenant form. The Apostle glories in his *deliverance* from it, and he stigmatises as *false* brethren certain Judaising teachers, who, he tells us, “came in privily to spy out our *liberty* which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into *bondage*.” Gal. ii. 4, 5. That it is the *ceremonial law* to which he refers is obvious, for he neither enjoyed nor desired any liberty from the moral law; and that the *liberty* of which he speaks, consisted in a real and practical freedom from the services of the Mosaic ritual is certain from the fact of its being of such a palpable nature that the false brethren could spy it out.

In the third chapter the apostle shows that the *promise* of salvation *by faith* was given to Abraham *before* the giving of the law, and he argues that the *law* could not disannul the *promise*, which was given 430 years be-

fore. Here we have demonstrative evidence that it is the Mosaic law of which he is speaking—the very date of its promulgation being expressly stated. The Apostle is reasoning with those who maintained that that law was still binding, and who, of course, thought the observance of it necessary to salvation. Such persons naturally replied to the Apostle's reasoning, by asking, “Wherefore then serveth the law?” The Apostle then shows the *design* and the *use* of the law, and specifies *the period during which it was appointed to continue*, “It was added,” says he, “*because* of transgression, TILL the seed should come, to whom the promise was made.” “Wherefore,” he adds, “the law was our *schoolmaster* to bring us unto Christ. But after that faith, (or Christ, the object of faith) is come, we are *no longer under a schoolmaster.*” Now, can you conceive of any thing more explicit than this? The law, it is expressly said, was our *schoolmaster*—it was appointed *till* the seed, that is, Christ, should come—but *now*, the seed being come, *we are no longer under the law.* The law of ceremonial observances has served its purpose of typifying and instructing in the knowledge of the Great Sacrifice by which atonement has

been made forsaken, and therefore it is no longer of any use. And how are these plain and pointed declarations attempted to be set aside? Why, it seems they are "*expressions taken by themselves!*" Really this is the most convenient method of getting rid of an obnoxious doctrine which, I venture to say, has yet been discovered. There is not a doctrine in the Bible, nor a precept in the decalogue, that may not be set aside by this summary process. No matter how clearly a doctrine may be propounded, or how frequently and forcibly it may be insisted on--no matter though it form the theme of lengthened discussion, and varied illustration; all this is at once, and with the greatest ease set aside, and we are dogmatically told, that all that has been said is nothing more than "*expressions taken by themselves.*"

The Apostle commences the fifth chapter by enjoining the Galatians to "stand fast in the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us *free*, and be not entangled *again* with the *yoke of bondage.*" You will observe that it is a *liberty* the Apostle refers to, which Christ hath *procured* for them, and that they were to beware of being *again* entangled with the

yoke of bondage—clearly implying that they had formerly been so. Now, is it credible that the Apostle would use such language regarding laws and institutions which were still obligatory? Would he speak of the laws of Christ as *a yoke of bondage*? Would not such language be impious and profane? Even to an earthly potentate it would be considered as highly indecorous and insulting to speak of his laws in such terms.

In his epistle to the Ephesians we find the apostle again recurring to this subject. “But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jews and Gentiles) one, and hath *broken down* the middle wall of partition between us; having *abolished* in his flesh (or by his death in the flesh) the *enmity*, even the *law of commandments* contained in (or *concerning*) ordinances.” Eph. ii. 13—15. That it is the Mosaic ritual of which he is speaking, there can be no doubt. It was emphatically a law of commandments concerning ordinances, and by its exclusive character was the cause of that *enmity* and *separation* which subsisted between Jews and Gentiles. It formed the middle wall of par-

tition between these two classes ; and hence the Apostle asserts that it was *broken down* by the death of Christ, in order that they might be united into one. In this passage the Apostle uses two expressions to denote the abrogation of the Mosaic law—it is a *wall*, which is now *broken down*, and a *law*, which is *abolished*. I would again ask you, could terms be used more distinctly and unequivocally to declare that the abrogation of what is called the *law of commandments* was accomplished ? The truth is, that deliverance from the bondage of ceremonial observances is a theme on which the Apostle delights to expatiate. He alludes to it in almost every one of his epistles, and exults in it as one of the triumphs which his Redeemer achieved on the cross. And I speak seriously and advisedly, when I state it as my firm conviction, that Mr. Begg, in opposing this doctrine, from a regard to the *letter* of prophecy, is guilty, not only of setting scripture *against itself*, but of attempting, (ignorantly, I believe,) to *despoil* the Saviour of one of the *trophyes of his cross*, and believers of a *great privilege* purchased for them by the *blood* of Emmanuel. Mark the triumphant manner in which the Apostle celebrates this event in his epistle to

the Colossians, chap. ii. 8—17. “ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ : For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power ; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances* that was against us, which was contrary to us, and *took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross* ; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man, THEREFORE,” the Apostle adds, “ judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an *holiday*, or of the *new moon*, or of the *Sabbath day*, which are a *shadow* of things to come ; but the *body* is of Christ.”

Again, let me ask, if it be possible to conceive of language more expressive of the doctrine, that by the death of Christ the ceremonial law, which consisted of *shadows*, was completely and for ever abrogated?

This subject also occupies a very considerable portion of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, being addressed to *believing Jews*, is not liable to an objection that might be urged by a captious critic against passages in the other Epistles which have been quoted, on the ground of their being addressed to *Gentiles*, to whom the Mosaic law did not so properly belong. In this Epistle, the Apostle discusses the point at great length, and proves, by a variety of arguments, the force of which Millenarians will never be able to gainsay, the doctrine which I have been endeavouring to establish. "If perfection," says he, (chap. vii. 14,) "were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received *the law*,) what further need was there that *another* priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being *changed*, there is made, of necessity, a *change also of the law.*" The word here translated *change*, according to Parkhurst,

(who is quoted by Mr. Begg as an authority,) properly signifies, in this case, an “abrogation,” and this is obviously the only sense which it will bear in the passage. This is further evident from what the Apostle says in the 18th verse, after quoting the promise, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” “For,” says he, “there is verily a *disannulling* of the commandment going before, for the *weakness* and *unprofitableness* thereof.” I should like to know what Mr. B. understands by *disannulling*, or in what terms he would have “an authoritative abrogation” expressed. Does he hesitate to receive the Apostle’s declaration as not sufficiently authoritative? or does he imagine that there is any other “commandment going before,” which has been disannulled, besides the ceremonial law?

Well, the *priesthood*, and consequently the *law*, have been changed, or disannulled; but may they not be re-instituted? May not another change take place? Let the Apostle answer the question: verse 24, “But this man, because he continueth *ever*, hath an *unchangeable* priesthood.” Is such a *change* at all necessary? Let the words of the Apostle again answer: verse 25, “He is *able* also

to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he *ever liveth to make intercession for them.*"

In the 8th chapter, the Apostle pursues this topic, and proves the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual from an Old Testament prediction, which should be deemed authoritative by our author, as he very frequently has recourse to this part of Scripture in support of his views. After showing that the Levitical priesthood and their services, were only shadows, the apostle remarks, "Christ hath obtained a *more excellent* ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a *better* covenant, which was established upon *better* promises. For if that *first* covenant had been *faultless*, then should no place have been found for the *second*. For, (or but) finding *fault* with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, (by the Prophet Jeremiah, xxvi. 31—34,) when I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the days when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant

that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord : I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people : and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." The *inference* which the Apostle deduces from this prediction is, " In that he saith, A *new* covenant, he hath made the *first* old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to *vanish away*."

The Apostle here distinctly informs us, that the first covenant had become *old* or *decayed*—the obvious meaning of which is, that it had become *useless*, and, of course, was ready to *vanish away*. Like an old and decayed garment, it was no longer fit for any useful purpose, and was therefore very properly *laid aside*. That this "*first covenant*" means the whole Mosaic ritual, is demonstrable from what the Apostle says in the 9th chapter, in which he gives a particular description of the things pertaining to it. But it seems Mr. Begg has taken this "*first covenant*" under his protection, and cannot think of allowing it to *vanish away*. Though

it was only a *shadow*, and the *substance* be now come, and though it is authoritatively declared to be a “yoke of bondage,” “imperfect,” “weak,” “faulty,” and “unprofitable,” he insists that the church should be again *entangled* with it.

It is not a little remarkable, that Mr. B., nothing deterred by the inspired application of the prophecy above quoted from Jeremiah to the New Testament church, at *its formation*, applies this beautiful and striking prediction to the period of the Millennium. The Apostle and he are at odds, not only regarding the proper *period* for its fulfilment, but also regarding its objects; for though the prophecy speaks of the *house of Israel* and the *house of Judah*, yet the Apostle hesitates not to *spiritualise* these terms, and applies the whole to the New Testament church—a species of appropriation at which Mr. B. is extremely indignant.

Moreover, it is not less undeserving of notice, that while Mr. B. places the fulfilment of this prediction at a period when, according to him, *sacrifice* and the *Levitical priesthood* are to be *re-established*, the Apostle quotes the prophecy for the *very purpose* of proving the *entire abrogation* of these! I

leave you to judge whether or not the Apostle or he is most likely to be correct in the interpretation of the prophecy.

The Apostle returns to this prophecy in the 10th chapter. From it, we have seen, he proves the abolition of the *whole* Mosaic ritual, and he recurs to it in order to prove that what formed the most prominent prescription of the law, namely, *sacrifice*, is no longer necessary or required. After specifying the various services and appurtenances of the “first covenant,” he shows that all these were only “*shadows* of good things to come,” and therefore incapable of making those who waited upon them *perfect*. This he infers from the fact of these sacrifices being often repeated, and also from a passage in the book of Psalms, where Christ is represented as saying, “Sacrifice and offering thou *wouldest not*, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offering and sacrifice thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” The Apostle argues from this passage in this manner: verses 8, 9, “Above,” says he, “when he said, sacrifice and offering for sin thou *wouldest not*, neither *hadst pleasure therein*, (which are

offered by the law) then said he, Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God. He *taketh away the first*, that he may establish the *second.*" And again, (verses 14—18) "For by *one offering* he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified, whereof the *Holy Ghost also is a witness* to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now," the Apostle argues, "*where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*" To these explicit declarations, which no sophistry can turn aside, and to which no reasoning can add weight, I have only to add, "*Let God be true, and every man a liar.*"

Instead of multiplying proofs of the abolition of sacrifice, and all other parts of the ceremonial law, which could be easily done, I would now put the question, Is it at all likely, that, during the Millennium, when *knowledge* is to be so widely diffused, that "*all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest,*" the church, or rather the most highly *honoured* and most *privileged* part of the church, will again be placed under a

schoolmaster? That in the last, the brightest, the most blissful, and the most perfect age of the church, it shall again be placed under “*tutors and governors,*” and treated as a *child* and as a *servant?* (Gal. iv. 1, 2.) Is it credible, that a system, the abolition of which Christ achieved by his death, having “*nailed it to his cross,*” will again be instituted by him at his second coming? That the “*wall of partition*” which he formerly “*broke down,*” he will again build up? That the “*yoke of bondage,*” from which he delivered his people at his *first* coming, he will, at his *second*, suffer to be again wreathed about their necks? Is it reasonable to suppose, that a system of observances which were appointed *till* a certain period, which has long since arrived, and *for* purposes which have been long ago served — a system of observances which have been abolished *because* they were *imperfect, faulty, weak, and unprofitable*, and after they have been supplanted by others more perfect, more glorious, more spiritual, and better adapted to an advanced state of the church, will yet again be established? Will the reasons *for which* the former system has been abrogated lose their weight, or become less true, as time advances? The whole reasoning

which the Apostle employs to *prove* and to *justify* the abolition of sacrifice, applies with *equal force* against its re-establishment. And I cannot allow myself to believe that this author, or any of those who have adopted his views, has attended to this subject with care, else he could not have embraced the sentiments which he avows.

Having endeavoured to state to you in as clear a manner as possible the Scripture doctrine as opposed to the opinion of Mr. Begg on this subject, I shall defer to another letter the examination of those passages on which he has founded his views. In the meantime,

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

I now resume the subject of Millennial sacrifice, and proceed to offer a few remarks on the evidence adduced by Mr. Begg in support of his opinions.

I shall first notice the evidence by which he imagines that he has proved that the Mosaic ritual is still in force. This he infers from the fact, that during the apostolic age, many Jewish converts, and even apostles, continued to practise the rites of Moses. In reply to this, let me observe, that though the Mosaic law was abolished—was no longer obligatory, it does not follow that the observance of it was positively sinful. This, I think, Mr. B. will not dispute; and more than this is not necessary to my argument. On this principle, then, a satisfactory account can be given for the practice of Christians, even apostles, in occasionally conforming, *for the sake of peace*, to the Mosaic law. In things that are indifferent, or not in themselves sinful, every Christian should be willing, like Paul, to become all things to all men. And we have this Apostle's explicit declaration, that in attending to the law, he was actuated by *other* motives than a belief of its obligation. “Unto the Jews,” says he, “I became as a Jew, *that I might gain the Jews*; to them that are under the law, as under the law, *that I might gain them that are under the law.*” 1 Cor. ix. 20. Even Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, hesi-

tated not to “live after the *manner* of the Gentiles,” and was only prevented continuing to do so through *fear* of certain Judaising zealots—a class of men who troubled the church at that time, and were the cause of Peter and some others acting with dissimulation. We find that when Paul was come up to Jerusalem, he was waited upon *privately* by the other Apostles, and advised to conform *publicly* to the law—the reason assigned for his doing so being, that many thousand Jewish converts were all “*zealous of the law*.” And are we not warranted to infer from this, that the law was not now binding; for if it was so, it would not have been necessary to urge motives of this kind upon the Apostle, before obtaining his compliance.

Let us now attend to the evidence by which he attempts to prove the re-institution of what he calls “*Millennial sacrifice*”—an *apocryphal* expression, by the use of which he insinuates, that there is a difference between sacrifice according to the Mosaic law, and the same service during the Millennium. But for this there is no evidence whatever. Besides, this notion is at variance with his own recorded opinion, as he states that the

New Testament *does not* contain *any* authoritative abrogation of the Mosaic law.

I do not think it necessary to enter upon an examination of those passages which speak *in general terms* of sacrifices and burnt-offerings during the period subsequent to the death of Christ, because these are so obviously to be understood in a spiritual sense, that I would as soon think of proving that Christ was not a “*door*,” as of proving that such passages are not to be understood literally. Even Millenarians will be forced to spiritualize the following remarkable prediction, Mal. i. 10, 11, “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and *in every place* INCENSE shall be offered unto my name, and a pure *offering*; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.” Mr. Begg has not been careful to notice this passage, and it cannot therefore be known whether he would spiritualize it or not; but as no such thing has been heard of, as Millenarians setting up *altars* in *any place* where they reside, and offering *incense* thereon, it is reasonable to conclude

that they have either overlooked the prophecy, or are disposed to *spiritualize* it. Without entering, therefore, on the consideration of such passages, I proceed at once to the examination of the remarkable vision recorded in the end of the book of Ezekiel.

During the period of the Babylonish captivity, this prophet was favoured “in the visions of God,” with the sight of a splendid temple, which he has minutely described in all its parts, with its various appurtenances, its ministering priesthood, and the sacrifices and other services to be performed in it. The *minuteness* with which these are described, and the *specific* directions given concerning it, appear to Mr. B. altogether inconsistent with the idea of any thing else than a literal temple. The argument deduced from such *minute* and *specific* directions amounts to this, that it is extremely *difficult*, if not *impossible*, to attach a spiritual meaning to the various parts of the description. But on the supposition of spiritual worship, and a prosperous state of religion, being pourtrayed by a temple, with its priests and services, it is not necessary that every minute part of the description should have a spiritual meaning. It is sufficient if the great outline can be shown to

have such a signification—the minor details being given to complete the picture. I am not ashamed to acknowledge, however, that there is great difficulty experienced in the spiritual interpretation of this part of Scripture; and I do not envy Mr. Begg the *ease* with which he gets over this and other passages. But difficulties of this kind are not peculiar to this part of the sacred writings. There are other passages where the same, and even greater difficulties have to be encountered in order to ascertain their true meaning. The Song of Solomon for instance, is equally difficult of interpretation with this vision, and the spiritual interpretation of that book might be opposed by the same species of logic which is employed against the spiritual interpretation of Ezekiel's prophecy. Without this writer's permission, I hesitate not to *assume* the spiritual interpretation of the Song of Solomon; and I would apply to those who read and understand it literally what the Apostle says of those who eat and drink of the Lord's Supper *ignorantly*, that they eat and drink *judgment* to themselves, “not discerning the Lord's body.” In like manner, those who read the Song of Solo-

mon in a literal and carnal manner, only add, by doing so, to their own condemnation.

After quoting the prophecy, (Isa. lx. 13.) “The glory of *Lebanon* shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious ;” it is asked, “For what other purpose than a *literal* one can such materials be used ? The trees here specified are in high estimation both for utility and ornament, and are therefore adapted to beautify a *literal* temple.” It is rather unfortunate, however, for this interpretation that *the glory of Lebanon* hath long ago departed. According to the accounts of the most recent travellers, its once goodly cedars are now no more. The predictions of the prophet have been fulfilled—“The earth languisheth and mourneth : Lebanon is *ashamed* and *hewn down*, &c.” But this difficulty, I doubt not, our author will *easily* get over. I have quoted the passage chiefly for the purpose of showing that the argument against the spiritual interpretation of such passages is equally applicable to others. Such, for example, as the following, which I think Mr. B. must feel himself obliged to spiritualize, however diffi-

cult the task,—“ King Solomon made himself a *chariot* of the *wood of Lebanon*. He made the *pillars* thereof of *silver*, the *bottom* thereof of *gold*, the covering of it of *purple*: the midst therof being *paved* with *love* for the daughters of Jerusalem.” Song iii. 9—11. Now, it is easy to ask, as Mr. B. does, for what other purposes than a literal chariot are such materials as the *wood of Lebanon*, and *gold*, and *silver*, and *purple* of use? These articles are in high estimation for utility and ornament, and are therefore adapted to beautify a *literal* chariot. This mode of reasoning, though exceedingly silly, is precisely the kind employed against the spiritual interpretation of Ezekiel’s vision, and other passages of a similar description.

It will tend greatly to diminish the difficulty of spiritualizing the temple of Ezekiel, if we reflect that the first temple, and its furniture, and priests, and services, were all of a *typical* character—were *patterns* of heavenly and spiritual things. Whence then the difficulty of supposing that a glorious, and pure, and prosperous state of religion might not be symbolized or prefigured by something of the same kind seen in vision. If, as the Apostle asserts, (Heb. iv. 9, &c.) the *first*

tabernacle, “in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices,” and “which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,” was “a figure” of a greater and more perfect *tabernacle not made with hands*,” of which Christ himself is the high priest; what more *natural* than to understand the same thing to be exhibited in vision, and that in a more perfect and glorious manner than it ever had been in the temple made with hands? If the literal “gifts and sacrifices,” and the “meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,” were all emblems of spiritual things; what is there improbable in supposing that these same spiritual things might be prefigured by a description of such or similar rites and ceremonies? Besides, even in respect of *difficulty*, the advantage is on this side of the question. For, though Ezekiel’s vision is *easily* managed by understanding it literally, how are all those passages which I have adduced, and others which might be quoted, from the apostolic epistles, to be got over. These present to my mind far greater difficulties to the views of our author than any that appear from considering the prophecy of Ezekiel in a spiritual sense. True, he has

also an easy method of “managing” them, by setting them down as “expressions by themselves.” But this is so gross an outrage upon every thing like propriety in the interpretation of Scripture, that the very mention of it must excite the indignation of the candid reader.

An esteemed acquaintance, on whose judgment I place much reliance, has suggested another method of interpreting Ezekiel’s vision, without either spiritualizing it, or considering it as a literal unfulfilled prediction. According to his view it was intended for the direction of the Jews, when they should return from Babylon, and contains directions which he thinks can *only* apply to them: such, for example, as those regarding certain Levites, the “*sons of Zadok*,” who kept the “*charge of the sanctuary*,” when others of the Levites went *astray after idols*. He farther believes that the prediction ought to be viewed like some others as of a *conditional* nature, and that it exhibits what God would have done for the Jews, and what he would have permitted them to do, if the specified condition were fulfilled. This condition he considers to be distinctly noticed to the prophet,—“*If they be ashamed of all that they have done,*

show them the form of the House, and the fashion thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.” Ezek. iii. 10, 11. From this it would appear that it was *only* on condition of the captives becoming penitent, being *ashamed* of all their iniquities, that the prophet was *permitted* to show the vision, that they might attend unto the directions which it contains. As they did not attend to these, it is presumed that the Jews were not informed of them ; and that in consequence of their impenitence, the Prophet had not shown them the form of the house. This view of the subject, it is worthy of remark, accords with the *general rule* of God’s procedure, which we find declared by the mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah, (chap. xviii. 7—10. “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it ; if that nation turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight that it obey

not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.”

But I proceed to notice the abuse which Mr. Begg has made of a prediction by the prophet Haggai, which he has endeavoured to press into his service, in proof of the re-erection of the Jewish temple. A more absurd attempt, indeed, has rarely been exhibited ; but those who are determined to support a system at all hazards, are not usually very scrupulous regarding the means which they employ in defence of it. Though it makes rather a long quotation, I must give his exposition of this prophecy at length, in order that the remarks I intend to make on it may be the better understood.

“ The second Temple was greatly inferior to the first in splendour, as we read, (Ezra iii. 12.) ‘ Many of the priests, and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the *First House*, when the foundation of *this House* was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.’ And concerning it, the Lord says to Israel, by the prophet Haggai, ‘ Who is left among you that saw this House in her first glory ? And how do you see it now ? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing ? ’ Hag. ii. 3. But he comforts them with the promise of one which shall *excel* the First : ‘ For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry

land, and I will shake all nations, and *the Desire of all nations* shall come, and I will fill this *House* with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver and the gold are mine, saith the Lord of hosts: the *glory* of this *latter House* shall be *greater* than the *former*, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.' ver. 6—9. The Desire of all nations, it is universally admitted, is here used as a title descriptive of the Saviour; and the prophecy is generally referred to the period of His First Advent, although the commentators have laboured under the utmost difficulty to make the prophecy accord with such an interpretation. The fact they cannot deny, that the Second temple was much inferior in splendour to the First. This difficulty they seek to evade, by departing from the *material* glory of the First, and referring to the *moral* glory of Christ having been in the Second as a Teacher. But this is not only to destroy altogether the prophet's contrast, but also to overlook the fact that the prophecy itself marks its reference to this very point. When it is said, the '*glory* of this *latter* House shall be *greater* than the *former*,' we would naturally understand the prediction to refer to the *same kind* of glory, the difference consisting not in the *nature*, but in the *degree* of it; and that, therefore, if it was a *material* glory in the one case, that so it would be in the other. And this view is confirmed when we observe that it was in the same respect that the Second House was *inferior* to the First. To this *natural* comparison between the First and Third House we are, moreover, limited by the language of the prophecy itself. By it we are taught that to the *material* superiority of the latter House the prophet really *does* refer: 'The *silver* and the *gold* are mine, saith the Lord,'—and he says so only in reference to the glorifying of this Tem-

ple: ‘the glory of *this* Latter House shall be *greater* than the *former*, saith the Lord of hosts. It is therefore a glory to the increase of which these precious metals can contribute, which is here spoken of. This was *the kind* of glory in which the First Temple far excelled the Second, and it is the glory in which *the latter* will be greater than even *the former*: ‘the silver and the gold are mine, saith the Lord.’ *In addition*, however, to this material superiority, the Lord promises to ‘fill this house with glory,’—a promise which evidently refers to the glory in which he will manifest Himself, and is altogether distinct from *that* glory of the First Temple in comparison of which the Second was as nothing.” Pages 96, 97.

In this attempt at exposition our author has raised a cloud of misrepresentations, which completely obscure the meaning of this beautiful prediction. Some of these I must now point out to you. In the first place, it is *not true* that the Lord, by the prophet, “*comforts* the desponding Jews with the promise of *one*, (that is, of a “*Third House*” or temple,) which shall excel the First.” A very little attention to the passage will shew that there is no such promise made by the prophet. When this prediction was uttered the Jews were only commencing to build the second temple, and the prophet *encourages* them to proceed in the erection of that house with the promise that the Lord would fill it

with glory. Having asked, (chap. ii. 3, 4.) Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now, is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" he adds, "yet now *be strong*, O Zerubabel, and *be strong*, O Joshua, and *be strong*, all ye people of the land, and *work*, for I am with you:—For thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once it is a *little while*, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the *Desire of all nations* shall come: and I will fill THIS *house* with glory," &c. Where is there, let me ask, in all this, the shadow of a promise of another House. Such a promise certainly would have been no *encouragement* in building the Second temple, for it would have amounted to a declaration that the work which the prophet was *professedly encouraging* them to proceed with, should be demolished, and that too (according to this author's view,) *long before* the "little while," when the prophecy was to receive its accomplishment. And would not that have been a strange sort of comfort, or rather encouragement?

In the second place, it is quite a mistake to suppose that it was merely, or chiefly, in respect of *material* glory, that the first tem-

ple excelled the second. The Jewish writers usually reckon *five* things which distinguished Solomon's from Zerubabel's temple. These were, 1st, The ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat which was upon it, with the cherubims of gold, together with the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written—2d, The shechinah, or Divine presence, in a cloud of glory over the mercy-seat—3d, The Urim and Thummim—4th, The holy fire upon the altar, which came from heaven—5th, The spirit of prophecy; for though Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, lived while the second temple was building, and prophesied after it was built, yet, on their death, the prophetic spirit ceased. These were the things in which the *first* so greatly excelled the *second* temple; and the anticipated want of which called forth the wailings of the pious Jews; and these are obviously more of a *spiritual* than of a *material* character. All the force, therefore, that exists in our author's reasoning, from the *contrast* drawn by the prophet, applies against his view of the matter; for if it was chiefly in respect of *spiritual* glory that the former excelled the latter, we must, according to him, “*naturally* understand the prediction to refer to the same kind of glory.” But be-

sides assuming the *material* nature of the glory of the first temple, he also endeavours to make it appear, from its being said, “The silver and the gold are mine, saith the Lord of hosts,” that it is *material* glory in which the latter temple will *excel* the first. “By the language of the prophecy,” says he, “we are taught that to the *material* superiority of the latter house the prophet *really does refer.*” But there are *different kinds of references*, and though the Lord does *refer* to the temple when he says, “The silver and the gold are mine,” that is a very different thing from saying that these metals would be used in adorning the temple. I apprehend that the *reference* to these substances is here intended to express their small importance; and that, if they were at all necessary, they would be forthcoming in rich abundance, for they are *the Lord's*, and at his command.

It is also a mistake to represent the prophet as saying, that “*in addition*” to this material superiority, the Lord promises to fill this house with glory. The prophet first specifies the *kind* of glory in which the second was to excel the first temple: “The Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory.” This must be admitted to be

spiritual glory. And when it is afterwards added, that “the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former,” we would “naturally understand” the *same kind* of glory to be meant that had been previously specified; and there is nothing in the language of the prophet to lead to a different conclusion.

It is very remarkable, that when all the blunders into which our author has fallen in considering this prophecy are properly examined, if true, they would, in reality, bear against himself. His assertions are not only *unfounded*, and his reasoning *unsound*, but, though the one were true, and the other correct, they would lead to quite an opposite conclusion from that which he is seeking to establish. For it is a fact, of which, however, Mr. B. seems to be entirely ignorant, that the *second* temple was almost entirely taken down, and rebuilt, and enlarged, and beautified by Herod, not long before the coming of our Saviour. Supposing, therefore, that he were correct in his interpretation of the prediction, and that Haggai actually promised a *third* temple, which should excel the first in material splendour, and with the *addition* of being filled with spiritual glory,

I am prepared to show that all this was *literally* accomplished in the temple which our Saviour honoured and glorified with his presence at his first advent. The *second* temple, (for so it may be considered, and so both Jewish and Christian writers unite in calling it,) as rebuilt and enlarged by Herod, far excelled the temple of Solomon in outward grandeur and magnificence. The *first* temple appears to have been only 70 cubits long, 30 broad, and 30 in height ; whereas the *second*, as enlarged by Herod, was 100 cubits long, 70 broad, and 100 in height. In respect of size, therefore, it was more than ten times the size of Solomon's ; and the Jewish writers unanimously agree in praising this temple for its grandeur and beauty, and the costliness of its workmanship. It was built of white marble, polished in the most exquisite manner. Some of the stones were 25 cubits long, 8 high, and 12 thick. "Its appearance," says Josephus, "had every thing that could strike the mind and astonish the sight. For it was on every side covered with *solid plates of gold*, so that when the sun shone upon it, it reflected such a strong and dazzling effulgence, that the eye of the beholder was obliged to turn away from it, be-

ing no more able to sustain its radiance than the splendour of the sun ; ” and he also remarks, “ that it was the most astonishing structure *he had ever seen or heard of*, as well on account of its architecture as its magnitude, and the richness and magnificence of its various parts, and the fame and reputation of its sacred appurtenances.” Tacitus calls it, *immensæ opulentiæ templum*—a temple of immense opulence.

Moreover, our author’s interpretation of Haggai’s prophecy is not only *literally* applicable to the temple of Herod, but it is altogether *inapplicable* to the description given of Ezekiel’s temple, which is the one to which he refers this prediction. There is not a single word said by Ezekiel of *gold* or *silver* ornaments. Even the *altar*, which in Solomon’s temple was wholly overlaid with gold, was exhibited to Ezekiel as entirely of wood. Whatever view, therefore, we take of Haggai’s prophecy, it is applicable, and *only* applicable to that temple which the Saviour filled with the glory of his personal presence.

But I have not yet exhausted the evidence which can be adduced in proof of the correctness of this application of Haggai’s prophecy. There is at hand the direct testimony of in-

spiration itself. With the coming of “the Desire of all nations,” the Lord also promises to “shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land,” which expressions are obviously to be interpreted, according to the figurative style of prophecy, to signify a great revolution in the moral, political, and social condition of mankind. Accordingly, we find the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, applying the shaking of the heavens and the earth to the abolition, or the “removing” of the Jewish ritual, and civil and ecclesiastical polity. In chap. xii. 25—28, he says, after describing the thunderings and other solemnities which accompanied the giving of the law, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice once shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens; and this word, yet once more, signifieth the *removing* of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving (or *having received*, as the ex-

pression ought to be rendered,) a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.” Now, let it be observed that the Apostle is professedly *contrasting* the Jewish and Christian dispensations—that the shaking of the heavens and the earth he interprets to “*signify* the *removing* of those things that are shaken”—that the reason of their removal is, that place may be given to those things which cannot be moved—and that those things which *cannot* be moved are the *kingdom* which they had already received, namely, the gospel dispensation, which is frequently spoken of as the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven. If we attend to these circumstances, we must see that this prediction of Haggai is applied by the apostle in reference to the first advent of Christ, and to the *abolition* of the Old Testament ritual. And thus we again find our author endeavouring to deduce from an Old Testament prediction a doctrine the *very opposite* of what an inspired apostle deduces from it. He tells us that “the commentators have *laboured* under the *utmost difficulty*” in referring this prediction to the first advent of Christ. Whether he views

the Apostle as one of those who have so “laboured,” we are not informed; but so it is that Paul does endeavour so to apply it.

I cannot leave this part of the subject without noticing Mr. Begg’s interpretation of the words of the institution of the Lord’s supper, as they are given by Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till *he come*.” This Mr. Begg refers of course to the coming of Christ at the Millennium, and remarks, “whether it (the Lord’s supper,) is then to be superseded by the institution of sacrifice we pretend not to determine.” To have added another word would have been hazardous, and might have involved the writer in difficulties. He therefore leaves the matter in this state of uncertainty, having modestly enough remarked previously, “we offer no conjecture on the probable design for which the institution of sacrifice is again to be restored during the millennial age.”

The ordinance of the Supper was instituted by our Saviour to commemorate his love to the children of men in dying for them; and it is the duty and privilege of believers to endeavour to maintain a lively remembrance

of the sufferings of their Redeemer. And what can be imagined so suitable for this purpose, and in every way so well adapted to our present condition, as the simple, yet holy ordinance of the Lord's supper. That there is little bodily exercise required, and no outward display in this institution, seems to be a subject of regret to Mr. Begg; and he would have us to expect that a more splendid mode of commemorating the Saviour's dying love will be established in the millennial age. Our Saviour, in answer to the question of the woman of Samaria, as to the proper *place* for worshipping God, said, John iv. 21, "Believe me the hour cometh, and *now is*, when ye shall neither in this mountain, *nor yet at Jerusalem*, worship the Father." And to give her some idea of the *nature* of that worship which should henceforth be offered, he adds, verses 23, 24, "The hour cometh, and *now is*, when the *true* worshippers shall worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him *must* worship him *in spirit and in truth*." The whole of this passage bears me out in stating the doctrine of Scripture on this point to be, that the time was now

past for ceremonial observances and earthly display in the worship of God—that henceforth a more simple and spiritual mode of worship should be established—and that only those would be accepted as *true* worshippers, who worshipped Him in a spiritual manner, without the use of sacrifice, or any other carnal offering.

But our Saviour has not left us room to question as to the *time* the ordinance of the Supper *is to continue* in the Church. As he was about to leave this world at the solemn period of its institution, he appointed this ordinance to strengthen the faith of his disciples, and to keep alive in their bosoms a remembrance of that love which he manifested by enduring the curse due to them for their transgressions, and also to comfort them in their journey through life; and he commanded that the ordinance should be observed “*till he come.*” To show what our Lord meant by his *coming*, I refer you to John xiv. 2, 3. “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again and receive you unto myself*, that where I am, there ye may

be also." The Saviour in this passage specially informs us as to the place to which he would go, and to *that* place he declares that believers shall go also. He further assures his followers that he will *come again* to receive them; and the obvious inference to be drawn from this passage is, that Christ will *come again*, not *personally* "to tabernacle with men," but to *take* his people to those mansions *in his Father's house*, which he has prepared for them. And, my dear sir, I would not envy the feelings of that man who does not discover in the simple elements of bread and wine, used in this ordinance, a display of the most astonishing grandeur and dignity; and at the same time, such a manifestation of the condescension and love of God, as we vainly seek to discover in the most perfect of those ordinances of the church which prefigured the coming and work of the Son of Man. For if the Apostle Paul is to be believed, the system of ceremonial observances had "no glory" in comparison with the "ministration of the Spirit," which is "the glory that excelleth." And rather than say with this author, that the ordinance of the Supper is only fitted for the church in its present suffering state, I would rather say,

that the church in its present state does not fully appreciate the significance and value of the ordinance ; and that it is only in a more unclouded and more prosperous state that the church will be able, by suitably improving this ordinance, to make its glory and excellence more conspicuous and manifest.

I have been led farther than I intended on this subject, but its paramount importance will, I hope, appear to you a sufficient apology. In my next letter I will take notice of some of Mr. Begg's remarks on the new Jerusalem, and the new Heavens and earth.

I am,

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

I have much pleasure in again addressing you on the subject of the Millennium; and, as proposed, I intend in this letter to offer some remarks on the New Jerusalem, and the new Heavens and new Earth.

The limits which I have prescribed to myself, together with my desire to notice chiefly those points, and those passages of Scripture which might justly be supposed to have weight with the candid inquirer after truth, have prevented me from noticing the many absurdities which disfigure the Millenarian scheme. But I cannot pass unnoticed the notion of the “New Jerusalem” being a *literal* city, which, it is imagined, will be brought down from heaven, and placed on this earth, in the land of Judea, as a residence for those saints who are expected by Millenarians to be raised from the dead at the commencement of the Millennium. Mr. Begg, of course, has taken up this notion, and he seems to rest much of his faith on the resemblance which he has traced between the city described by Ezekiel in the conclusion of his prophecies, and the new Jerusalem seen in vision by the Apostle John. He has endeavoured to trace a resemblance between the two cities, and to prove their identity, and deduces from this an argument for their *literal* nature. Though it could be demonstrated, however, that the description of the prophet perfectly coincided with that of the Apostle in all points, it would not affect the

question, whether that description referred to a literal or a symbolical city. But we must not “overlook” Mr. Begg’s observations on the measurements of Ezekiel’s city and the New Jerusalem seen in vision by John. He tells us, that in all the works he had seen, which “treat on this point,” a great discrepancy was supposed to exist between the statements of Ezekiel and John; and he adds, “this *mistake* has arisen from an oversight of the fact, that while the one states the *circumference*, the other informs us of the *square measurement.*” Now, this is a statement so very extraordinary, as to require some explanation. Not *one* of the writers “which treat on this point,” whose works I have consulted, have overlooked the fact that Ezekiel states the *circumference*; nor can I suppose it possible that any one could overlook this fact, it is so distinctly mentioned. With regard to the measurement stated by the Apostle, though Mr. Begg asserts that it is the “*square measurement*” which John gives, yet I am not disposed to receive *his assertion* as sufficient evidence of “the fact.” Before he was entitled to accuse those whose works he had consulted on this subject, of *overlooking* this, he ought to have pointed out where

the fact itself is stated. The statement of the Apostle is simply this: Rev. xxi. 16, “And the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured *the city* with the reed, 12000 furlongs; the *length*, and the *breadth*, and the *height* of it are *equal*.” From this description it appears that the city was, in form, a perfect cube, having all its sides equal, and all its angles right angles, and when measured, was found to be 12000 furlongs.

There are only two ways by which this measurement can possibly be applied, neither of which agree with Mr. Begg’s plan. We must either understand this measurement as the cubic or solid content of the city,—that the 12000 furlongs included the *height* as well as the length and the breadth, and not the two latter *merely*, as Mr. Begg asserts; or else we must understand that the 12000 furlongs is the measurement of *each* of the sides of the city—its *length*, and *breadth*, and *height*. Moreover, he tells us that Ezekiel’s city was “round about 18000 measures of the angel’s *reed*, which was six cubits.” Now, again, I have to observe, that this is *an assertion* of which the proof has not been adduced. The prophet makes no such state-

ment. He does not say whether it was *reeds* or *cubits*; and as the latter measure is mentioned in chap. xlvi. 2, it seems at least as likely that the latter is intended. There are some other discrepancies in Mr. Begg's statement, which might be noticed, but it is not necessary for my purpose.

I proceed, therefore, to make a few remarks on the *nature* of the New Jerusalem. As expressive of my own views, I beg to quote the words of the learned and pious Dr. Doddridge. Speaking of the New Jerusalem he says, “To interpret it, therefore, as if there were *such a city made in heaven*, and by angelic power to be brought down to earth, is so *wild* and romantic a thought, that one would wonder *any one* person of *learning* and *understanding* should ever have embraced it.” That the New Jerusalem is intended as a symbolical representation of the *Church triumphant*, is so exceedingly obvious,—nay is so unequivocally declared,—that on hearing it denied, one experiences those peculiar emotions which arise in the mind when truths of which we have an intuitive or conscious perception are called in question. “Unequivocally declared?” do you ask? Yes; the language is not too strong: for what

can possibly be more explicit than the following ; Rev. xxi. 9, 10, “And there came unto me one of the seven angels—and talked with me, saying, Come hither, *I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and *showed me* that great *city*, the *holy Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God.” Could you desire any thing more explicit or unequivocal than this ? The angel comes to John, and asks him to go with him, and he would show him the bride, the Lamb’s wife. John is then carried away in the Spirit to a high mountain, and the angel, according to *promise*, shows him the *bride, the Lamb's wife*, namely, that great *city*, the *holy Jerusalem*. How would you feel after reading the account of the vision given so simply and so beautifully by the Apostle, if any person were to try to persuade you that the “Holy Jerusalem” does *not* mean “*the bride, the Lamb's wife*,” but a literal city ? Certainly you would say to such a one that he had yet to learn the first lesson in the reading of scripture. But you have, no doubt, felt as much astonished and indignant as myself to find Mr. B., in quoting this passage, entirely omitting the 9th verse, and

thus overlooking the *inspired spiritual* interpretation of the 10th verse, that he may apply the passage to his own carnal conceptions of its meaning. Doubtless this was an “oversight.”

Every part of the description of this city, and the whole context, clearly show that it is of a symbolical nature. But my limits do not permit me to enter minutely into the consideration of these at present. I would only observe that the account of the New Jerusalem is introduced *immediately after* the description of the *general* resurrection, and of the fate of those who were *not* “written in the book of life.” Now, what could be more natural than to expect that, in such circumstances, we should also be favoured with an account of the ultimate condition of those whose names *were* written in the book of life? And unless we understand this to be the object of the passage quoted, and of the subsequent part of the chapter, the book of Revelation closes without any such account,—a thing certainly very improbable. Mr. Begg endeavours to escape from the force of the argument derived from the connection in which the New Jerusalem stands with regard to the general resurrection, by telling us, that

“the order of insertion is of itself *no criterion* of the order of time.” And thus it is that the most obvious and generally admitted rules are set aside when they happen to stand in his way. But that the “order of insertion” is a good general rule or criterion, is evinced by Mr. Begg himself in numerous instances: and he never fails to avail himself of it when he thinks it will strengthen his argument. All general rules are good when they favour his cause, but the moment they are brought to bear against his views, he turns round on them—declares them to be no criterion—brings forward, it may be, an *exception* to them, and thus the question is settled. He indeed remarks, (tacitly admitting that he was deviating from a sound criterion,) that

“In all such cases” of deviation from the order of insertion, “a key is given for the elucidation of the prophecy, and for determining the relative periods of the several parts. In the case before us, the New Jerusalem descends to the *new earth*, and this is connected with the Millennium by the prediction of the prophet Isaiah. Its relation to time, and the things of time, is farther evident from the fact that ‘the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it;’ it must therefore have a reference to this world, while the relation subsists between kings and their subjects.”

But this is throughout a string of mere *assumptions*. The statement that the New Jerusalem descends to the *new earth* is a purely *apocryphal* addition to the scriptural account of the matter. The Apostle does not say that it descended to the *new earth*, or to *any other earth*. He saw it “descending from God out of heaven,” but where it alighted, or whether it alighted any where, or whether, like the sheet seen by Peter in vision, it was drawn up again to heaven, the apostle does not inform us: and when he is silent, we ought to be so also, lest we render ourselves liable to the curse pronounced on those who *add* to the words of the prophecy of this book.

It is also an assumption that the *new earth* is “connected with the Millennium, by the prediction of the prophet Isaiah.” I shall endeavour, by and by, to show, that the prophecy in Isaiah is synchronous with the “new heavens and new earth” mentioned by Peter and by John. And that *these must* be referred to the times subsequent to the Millennium I shall be able to prove to the satisfaction of every reasonable mind; and this will further evince that the new Jerusalem is not designed as the peculiar “resi-

dence" of the pre-millennial saints. Such a statement, by the way, is another *apocryphal* addition to the scripture account of the New Jerusalem. It is no where said to be the *residence* of *that* or any other *class* of the saints. The Apostle indeed tells us, that "there shall in no wise *enter into it* any thing that defileth—but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life." But a permission to *enter into* a city does not necessarily imply a residence in it.

There are several other considerations which might be urged in confirmation of the symbolical nature of the New Jerusalem; but enough, I trust, has been said to convince you of the truth of this view of the subject. I go on, therefore, to make a few remarks on the "new heavens and the new earth,"—a subject with which the new Jerusalem is intimately connected.

The chief point to be ascertained regarding the new heavens and the new earth, is the *period of time* at which they are to be created. If this point could be established there would be less dispute respecting their nature. Let us, therefore, in an impartial manner, endeavour to ascertain the mind of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in the scriptures on this subject.

I need scarcely remind you that the destruction of the *present* heavens and earth must necessarily *precede* the creation of the *new* heavens and earth. If, therefore, we can determine when that destruction is to take place it will enable us to fix on the time when the latter event will happen. Now observe that their destruction is expressly stated to be at the time of the general resurrection. The 20th chapter of the book of Revelation is admitted on all hands—by millenarians as well as anti-millenarians—to be a narrative of events from the commencement of the Millennium down to the period of the general resurrection and the consummation of all things. Well, in the 11th verse of that chapter, we read as follows; “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it; from whose face the *earth* and the *heavens fled away*; and there was found *no place for them.*” That this language intimates the destruction of the world, cannot admit of reasonable doubt; and the *time when* that is to happen, is a matter about which there can be no dispute. Mr. Begg places the chain of events, of which this forms a link, at the times subsequent to the Millennium. Here, then, I might safely leave the question with

you. But observe, only four verses after the one quoted above,—in which the apostle says the heavens and the earth had *fled away*,—he adds, “And I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth ; for the *first* heaven and the *first* earth were *passed away*.” Now, does not this bear all the marks of a regular narrative of a series of consecutive events ? Is it not exceedingly plain and obvious, that the *new* heavens and earth of which the Apostle here speaks, were created *after* the “*passing*” or “*fleeing*” away of the first heavens and earth ? There is no possibility of evading the force of this, but by supposing that the heavens and earth are to be *twice* destroyed : and that those which the Apostle says had *fled away* from the face of the judge, were the *new*, and not the *first* heavens and earth. And this supposition would lead us into the absurdity of maintaining that the Apostle *first* describes the *destruction*, and *next* the *creation* of the same things : and this is something worse than a violation of the “*order of insertion*.” And on this supposition, what is to become of the New Jerusalem, the “*residence*” of the saints, if the earth on which it is placed, is to flee away, and no place be found for it ? Such an idea, be-

sides, is altogether inconsistent with those scriptures which speak of the *enduring* and *imperishable* nature of the inheritance of the saints.

The evidence deducible from this passage and its context, for the opinion that the new heavens and earth, refer to events which are posterior to the Millennium, I hold to be incontrovertible, and I may safely challenge any one to overturn it. But I have not yet adverted to the whole of the evidence for the correctness of this opinion. Let us glance at some of the things said respecting this new heavens and earth, and we shall find these confirmatory of the view for which I am contending. In chapter xxi. 4, 5, it is declared, “And there shall be *no more death*, neither *sorrow*, nor *crying*, neither shall there be any more *pain*, for the *former* things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make *all things new*,” &c. Such statements are altogether irreconcilable with Mr. Begg’s views of the Millennium; for according to him, there will then be *sin*, and *death*, and *sorrow*, and *pain*. The *child* is then to *die an hundred years old*, “and the *sinner* being an hundred years old, shall be *accursed*.” The nations of the

earth are, at that period, to be *punished* with *drought*, and other *plagues*; and during the season succeeding the Millennium, the wicked are represented as the *sand of the sea* for multitude, and as exceeding in *audaciousness* all that ever went before them; and fire comes down out of heaven and *consumes* them. All this is so marvellously inconsistent with the declaration that there shall be no more *pain*, nor *death*, nor *sorrow*, and that all things shall be made *new*, as to make it quite obvious that both statements cannot refer to the same period.

I have now to request your attention to the passage in 2 Pet. iii.; from which you will see no less clearly, that the new heavens and earth do refer to times subsequent to the Millennium. The evidence for this opinion, which this passage affords, is both abundant and conclusive; and in order that you may have it fully before you, let me request you to read the whole chapter. I shall quote here verses 7—10. “But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto *fire*, against *the day of judgment*, and *perdition* of ungodly men. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing that one day is with the Lord as a

thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is *long-suffering* to us-ward, *not willing* that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. But *the day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night, in the which the *heavens* shall *pass away* with a great noise, and the *elements* shall *melt* with *ferrent* (or *vehement*) *heat*, the *earth* also, and the works that are therein shall be *burnt up.*" I have first to direct your attention to the very significant expression, "*the day of judgment.*" This phrase is so plainly descriptive of the day of final retribution, and from the connexion in which it stands, has so obviously a reference to that event, that this application of it has scarcely ever been called in question. But Mr. Begg has discovered in it an allusion to an event of an entirely different character. His ridiculous attempt to transmute the *sabbath-day*, mentioned in Matt. xxiv. into the *Millennium*, has already been noticed. But that is an instance of transmutation quite trifling in comparison of the present. I am sure it must excite your surprise, as well as that of every reasonable mind, to find him endeavouring to make it appear that "*the*

Millennium" may, with *perfect propriety*, be called "*the day of judgment !!!*" The following is the passage in his work to which I allude.

"In a former page we have shown that 'day' is, in Scripture, often applied to an indefinite period of time, and that it is thus used to designate the *Millennial age*. It may be proper also to notice that 'judgment' and 'to judge' are not confined to the award of happiness or misery, but are frequently used in the sense of *government* and *to govern*, during that dispensation."...."This judgment or government is also given to *the saints* during THE MILLENNIUM, which may therefore, with *perfect propriety*, be called '*THE DAY OF JUDGMENT*'"...."Peter's use of the expression 'day of judgment,' may, therefore, be regarded as another instance of allusion to the *Millennial day*."

Now, what say you to this most scandalous attempt to explain away, or to travesty the language of Scripture? Is this a specimen of what Mr. Begg means by the "plain" and "obvious" and "unsophisticated" sense of Scripture? Is this what he means by the "submission due to revealed truth?" If so, then "submission" means "rejection," and the *plain* sense of Scripture means the most *unnatural* one. But let us see how utterly irreconcilable such a use of the expression is with the context. You will observe that the term "day," in the passage before us, refers not

only to the “judgment,” but also to the “*perdition of ungodly men*,” from which it is evident that these two expressions, if not perfectly synonymous, refer at least to synchronous events ; and if such be the case, how does this accord with the idea that the Millennium will be the season of purest bliss and felicity ? And how could it be said that the world was reserved unto *fire against*, or *at* the Millennium ? Consider also that the “day of judgment,” or “day of the Lord,” is represented as the *effect or consequence* of the *long-suffering* of God having drawn to a close. And is not this quite inconsistent with the idea that the Millennium, in an especial manner, will be the season during which the desire or willingness of God that none may perish, but that all may come to repentance, will be manifested ? If millennial times are to be “times of *refreshing* from the presence of the Lord,” how can it be said that the *long-suffering* of God is displayed by his *delaying* these times ? These are inconsistencies which it is impossible to reconcile ; and no other interpretation of the passage will bear examination, but that which refers “the day of judgment” to the consummation of all things.

I have now to solicit your attention to the

peculiarly strong language employed by the Apostle in describing the destruction of the world. “The *heavens* shall *pass away*—the *elements* shall *melt with fervent heat*—the *earth* also, and the *works* that are thereon, shall be *burnt up*,” or *utterly burnt*, as the expression might be translated. Now, I cannot conceive it possible to find language which could more unequivocally express the complete destruction of this world, with all its works. Yet Mr. Begg expects that “*nations*” will survive this terrible catastrophe. To suppose that any mortal man, far less vast multitudes of them, will survive the conflagration of the world, the *passing away* of the *heavens*, and the melting of the *elements*, is to set at defiance the obvious meaning of language; and to inculcate such an opinion is to delude sinners with a *vain hope*, and to defeat the design of the Apostle in this passage, which is to convince sinners of the utter hopelessness of escape, if they do not repent before that day. Mr. Begg admits that there is “much difficulty” in explaining this passage in accordance with his views, and indulges in some pious (and no doubt well-meant, but exceedingly ill-timed and misplaced,) reflections on the duty of faith in

the veracity and faithfulness of God. But God has nowhere *promised* that any man, far less "nations" of men, shall survive the utter destruction which is declared by the mouth of his holy Apostle in the above passage. On the contrary, he has inspired his servant to use language which, in the most emphatic and guarded manner, utterly excludes such an idea. To enjoin *faith*, therefore, in the opinion which Mr. Begg advocates, is obviously to require us to believe a *lie* instead of *the truth*. The apostle uses the very *strongest* language to *convince all* that there can be *no escape*. God has borne long with sinners, but his forbearance and long-suffering will come to an end. Then the *hope* of the hypocrite shall perish. "Seeing then," says the apostle, "that **ALL** *these things* shall be *dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the *heavens* being *on fire* shall be *dissolved*, and the *elements* shall *melt* with *fervent heat*. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for *new* heavens, and a *new* earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. iii. 11—13.

Here we have, as in Rev. xxi. the *new*

heavens and earth introduced immediately after an account of the “passing,” or “fleeting” away of the heavens and earth—thus showing that the two passages are perfectly parallel. As there cannot be any dispute as to the time when the *heavens* and *earth fled away* from the face of the Judge, and as the passing away of the heavens mentioned by Peter is obviously the same event as that described by John, and as Peter expressly mentions that it is the heavens and earth *which are now* that are to be then destroyed, which event is followed by the creation of the *new* heavens and earth, the conclusion is irresistible, that the event in question is posterior to the Millennium. It is worthy of notice also, that the apostle ranks himself among that class who were “*looking*” for the new heavens and earth. Whereas, if Mr. Begg’s view were correct, he and his fellow-christians ought to have been looking for the New Jerusalem. Mr. B. tells us that “much *confusion* has resulted from applying to the inhabitants of the *new earth* the *character* of the citizens of the New Jerusalem.” From what the apostle says, it would seem that he has been the cause of some of the “confusion” of which this author speaks, by expressing an

expectation that he would enjoy the new heavens and earth.

I now proceed to a consideration of the passage in Isaiah to which Peter refers, when he says, “Nevertheless, we, *according to his promise*, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” It may be observed, that the passage in Isaiah is the one on which Millenarians mainly rest their views. Having assumed that Isaiah refers to the Millennium as the period for the creation of the new heavens and earth, they next proceed, in defiance of every principle of decorum, so to interpret, or rather misinterpret, the passages in Peter and Revelation, as to make them harmonize with their theory, wholly overlooking the fact, that the two latter passages contain by far the most full and clear account of the new heavens and earth, both as to their nature and the period of their creation. There is nothing, indeed, in Isaiah, that gives the least countenance to their theory, except the circumstance of its being introduced immediately *before* a prophecy relating to the Millennium. But I must quote the passage with its context, in order that you may perceive the great strength of the evidence on which they

build their scheme. Isa. lxv. 17—19, “For behold, I create *new heavens and a new earth*, and the former shall not be remembered, nor brought into mind. *But*, (or *nevertheless*,) be ye glad and rejoice in that which I create ; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” Now, granting that the latter part of this passage is a description of millennial times, it does not necessarily follow that the *former* part is so also. The *only* reason for such a conclusion is the “order of insertion,” which, Mr. B. tells us, is “*of itself no criterion*” by which to judge of the “order of time.” That it is not, in all cases, an infallible criterion, I admit ; and as I have already shown, from the passages in Peter and Revelation, that the new heavens and earth must be subsequent to the Millennium, and as Peter refers to the passage in Isaiah as an illustration, or an authority, for his own statement, we are obviously not only warranted, but obliged to understand the passage in Isaiah as referring to the same period of time. The disjunctive particle *but*, or *nevertheless*, naturally, indeed, leads to the

conclusion, that the two events which it connects, or rather contrasts, are either different in their nature, or refer to different epochs. Independent of this consideration, however, there are numerous instances in Isaiah, and the other prophets, where the most abrupt and sudden transitions are made. The remarkable prophecy recorded Isaiah vii. 14, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," &c. is an instance of this kind. On examining the context, you will perceive that this prediction is introduced as a sign to the king of Judah, on the occasion of the kings of Syria and Israel going up to Jerusalem to war against it. No insurmountable objection, therefore, can be deduced from the "order of insertion" against referring the 17th verse of the passage quoted from Isaiah, to a period subsequent to the Millennium, though the 18th and 19th verses be regarded as a description of the Millennium itself.

I intended here to bring to a close my remarks on the subject of the Millennium. But there are yet a few things worthy of notice which have not come under our observation. One of these is the evidence contained in Ezekiel's prophecy, that the *prince*, so frequently spoken of, and of whom Mr. Begg

speaks as the Lord Jesus Christ, is altogether one like ourselves. The prophet says, chap. xlvi. 21, 22, “In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince prepare for *himself*, and for all the people of the land, a bullock for a *sin-offering*.” As Mr. Begg refers the whole of the prophecy to the Millennium, and assures us that David, the Beloved, or in other words, Christ himself, shall be personally present in the land of Judea, seated on the throne of his father David, ruling and governing his people, and shall possess a portion of the land, he must apply the passage quoted above to the Lord. Again the prophet says, chap. xlvi. 16, “If the prince give a gift unto any of his *sons*, the inheritance thereof shall be his *sons'*; it shall be their possession by inheritance. But if he give a gift of an inheritance to one of his *servants*, then it shall be his to the year of liberty: after it shall return to the prince; but his inheritance shall be his *sons'* for them. Moreover, the prince shall not take of the people’s inheritance by *oppression*, to *thrust them out* of their possession; but he shall give his *sons'* inheritance

out of his own possession ; that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.” Here we have abundant evidence, if such were necessary, to prove that *the prince*, spoken of throughout by the prophet Ezekiel, has nothing in common with the Redeemer, who is not limited in his *gifts* ; neither has he *sons* who differ from *servants*, nor sons of such a peculiar kind as to be emphatically so called, *all* the saints being sons of God.

Another thing I would notice is the fulfilment of those prophecies in the Old Testament which speak of the earth being moved, or shaken, or staggering to and fro. These Mr. B. cannot in any way discover to be yet accomplished. That they do refer to that wonderful change which took place in the world and in the church at the first advent of our Saviour, appears to me beyond doubt. The fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel on the day of Pentecost, noticed by the Apostle Peter, is of itself sufficient evidence of the fact. Acts ii. 14—20, “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them, “Ye men of Judea, &c. *This is that* which was spoken by the prophet Joel : and it shall come to pass in the last days, (of the Jewish dispensation,) saith God,

I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh, and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath ; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.”

The Apostle Paul also, as we have already noticed, refers to the same wonderful event the prophecy of Haggai,—“ Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens ;” which prophecy the Apostle declares was fulfilled in the establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer. That the world was *literally* shaken during the Saviour’s residence on earth, and more especially at the awful period of his last sufferings, is abundantly testified, and we are warranted to apply to that period the prophecy that “ the sun should be darkened, and the moon be turned to blood.” All nature then, may, with propriety, be said to have been in agony ; and the testimony of a heathen to the awful appearance of nature is, that “ truly the God of nature is expiring.” We have also testimony from Scripture to this fact, in the words of a Roman soldier—“ Truly this was the Son of God ;”

uttered when the earth did *quake*, the rocks *rent*, and the graves were opened.

The good old Simeon, speaking by the Spirit, declares that prophecy fulfilled at the coming of Christ. Isaiah lii. 10, "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see thy salvation ;" and also that prophecy, Is. xlix. 5, 6, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, Is it a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, *to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel?* I will *also* give thee for a light to lighten the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." The words of Simeon are, Luke ii. 30—32, "Mine eyes hath seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the *glory* of my people Israel."

I have now brought my remarks on Mr. Begg's defence of Millenarianism to a close for the present. I feel conscious that I have not been actuated by any improper feeling towards that gentleman, and I hope that I

have not been betrayed into any expressions of disrespect, or into any unwarrantable insinuations regarding his motives. That I have frequently felt highly indignant at some of his attempts to explain away the *meaning* of the most plain and obvious passages, and even sometimes the *language* of Scripture, is what I freely confess, but for which I can make no apology.

Mr. Begg talks much about the plain and literal sense of Scripture, but he seems not to know, that the most *obvious* meaning is frequently a totally different thing from the *literal* sense of Scripture. My own conviction of the erroneousness of the Millenarian views has been much strengthened by the inquiries which I have been led to make while writing these letters for your benefit; and if they should have the same effect on your mind, I shall not lose my reward for any little labour they have cost me.

With my best wishes for your spiritual good,

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

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